University of Alberta

Men's Experience of Non-voluntary Attendance In Counselling

by

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Abstract

What is therapy like for clients whose participation is not completely voluntary? A review of the literature shows that little understanding is evident regarding the process of therapy from the context of the clients' level of voluntarism. Four male clients were identified and interviewed about their non-voluntary attendance in counselling. In an intensive qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts, 16 shared themes were identified that were organized into five higher ordered themes: (1) Pressures and Barriers that Influenced Initial Process of Counselling, (2) Experiences Emotional Relaxation In Counselling, (3) Perception of Influential Qualities In Counselling, (4) Counselling Has Encouraged Change and Growth, and (5) Experiences Increased Receptivity Towards Counselling. Results of this study suggest the need for a conceptual paradigm shift regarding clients' level of voluntarism, which can help to understand those clients who may otherwise be labeled as "resistant" or "difficult."

University of Alberta

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for the acceptance, a thesis entitled Men's Experience of Non-voluntary Attendance In Counselling submitted by Lori J. Goodkey in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counselling Psychology.

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August 9th, 2000

For my brother, Mark

Your silence continues to echo in my heart
Your strength helps me to move forward

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Men's Experience of Non-voluntary Attendance In Counselling

Introduction

Personal Note

Through my personal history of working as a probation officer with adult offenders, I was often exposed to the clients' frustrations of having to attend mandated therapy. Through this experience, it became disheartening when some of these clients would report back that the counselling had been ineffectual or was a "waste of time." Consequently, I began to wonder what would have made their experience more worthwhile. I wondered, what was it that they were missing or that they would have needed to turn their counselling into a positive experience?

During my fledging years as a clinician-in-training I began to see a similar state of affairs, with clients who were not attending counselling completely of their own accord. Although these clients were not mandated, they seemed to be shuffling into the counselling room only at the last possible minute before their session began. In talking to other student clinicians, words such as "reluctant" or "difficult" or even "multiple issues" began to flow within my developing counselling vocabulary to describe or label these clients.

What I realized much later, after the last client's file had been closed, is that quite possibly many of these clients had attended counselling non-voluntarily, and I didn't know to ask. Even more realization came after when I recognized that my previous adult offenders may found counselling frustrating because they were being squeezed into a therapy framework that didn't quite fit.

Background to the Research

The majority of training institutions, widely published journals, and influential theorists have been using the model of the voluntary client to teach about, to write about and to theorize about. Subsequently, traditional theories and models of therapy have been rooted in the foundation of a voluntary framework, and have often failed to recognize that voluntary attendance exists on a continuum. Emerging research suggests that on one end of the continuum are involuntary clients who are mandated to counselling and have absolutely no desire to be in therapy. On the other end of the continuum are voluntary clients who feel an absence of pressure and have freely chosen to attend therapy. Within the middle of the continuum are non-voluntary clients, who have not been mandated to counselling, yet perceive some type of external pressure to attend (Rooney, 1992). Subsequently, research has begun to argue that the level of voluntarism of the client can significantly impact the process of therapy and, before the therapist labels a client as "resistant" or "difficult," the client's level of voluntarism needs to examined. Clients who attend non-voluntarily also perceive a set of risks and consequences that can influence their decision to attend counselling (Schottenfeld, 1989). However, despite the emerging awareness that voluntary attendance exists on a continuum, research has overlooked the experience of non-voluntary clients in counselling. Therefore, the present study strives to examine the experience of non-voluntary attendance from the perspective of the client.

Overview of Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this present study is to examine the experience of men who attend counselling non-voluntarily. Through an exploratory approach, it is the researcher's hope to gain a better understanding of the client's process of attending therapy under the pressure or threat of some external influence. Furthermore, by investigating this phenomenon, I hope to provide the reader with a greater awareness of the counselling process through the lived experience of men whose attendance is influenced by external circumstances. As previously mentioned, research investigating the emotional, psychological, and behavioral processes of clients attending therapy through some external pressure, has been limited. Through this study, an alternative perspective into the traditional counselling paradigm will be offered which will encourage additional considerations to be made when counselling clients who might otherwise be thought of as "difficult" or "resistant."

Format of Thesis

This thesis consists of six sections: Introduction, Literature Review, Theoretical Review, Method, Data Analysis and Results, and Discussion.

In the Introduction, the rational for this research project is provided, including both personal and background information concerning the research area, as well as the purpose of the study. In the Literature Review, a discussion of the existing literature is provided with respect to defining the non-voluntary client, as well as current research that has begun to challenge the existing voluntary framework of counselling. Within the Theoretical Review, an analysis of related theoretical contributions are discussed with the purpose of augmenting the understanding of non-voluntary clients from a theoretical perspective. In the Method section, a discussion is provided regarding the rational for choosing the phenomenological method as well as the researcher's role in the process of phenomenological research. A rationale for the use of the screening instrument is also discussed. Additionally, the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis stages are described herein. In the Data Analysis the findings of the phenomena are presented regarding the lived experience of non-voluntary clients attending personal counselling. Both individual and shared experiences of the participants are included in this section. In the Discussion the findings are presented in reference to current research and future implications.

Literature Review

There tends to be an understanding among therapists that it is easier to explore issues and work with clients who want to be in therapy (Glucksthal-Philipp, 1999). Voluntary clients are often believed by therapists to be more motivated and ready for change than those who are pressured into therapy by the threat of a partner, friend, employer, or the legal system. Yet, a greater awareness of the benefits of psychotherapy and an increase of referrals, such as Employee Assistance Programs (Glucksthal-Philipp, 1999), has led more people to the therapist's office, albeit dragging their heels. However, given the fragmented and underdeveloped research, and limited awareness in the literature, there are few recommendations to facilitate therapy with clients who attend non-voluntarily.

Who is the Non-voluntary Client?

There are many definitions in the literature that describe people who attend therapy under the coercion of somebody or something else. Ivanoff, Blythe and Tripodi (1994) refer to "nonmandated involuntary clients" as those who are not legally directed to therapy, but faced significant pressure from others to attend. Similarly, Rooney (1992) describes "non-voluntary clients" as having contact with helping professionals because of external pressure from agencies, others, and outside events. Furthermore, Rooney suggests that non-voluntary clients might also be considered the "invisible involuntary" (p. 5), as the external pressures that they face are often missed by therapists who consider them reluctant or resistant voluntary clients (Cingolani, 1984). Lipsky (1980) takes a political stance in defining this population when he argues that all clients under the care of "street level bureaucracies" (i.e., public agencies) are non-voluntary because such clientele are not able to afford or obtain the services through private agencies.

As a result of these mostly compatible definitions of the coerced client, a circumscribed theory on voluntarism (Slonim-Nevo, 1996) has emerged. Slonim-Nevo's philosophy has three basic tenets which place clients on the voluntary continuum: (1) how severe the consequences might be if the client refused to be treated; (2) how much freedom the client has in choosing a counsellor; and (3) how much the therapeutic process itself is controlled by external policies, regulations, and public / private resources (p. 120). Further, she proposed that between the two ends of the voluntarism continuum are clients who may experience more independence in one area than in another. Thus, when defining the degree of voluntarism using Slonim-Nevo's constructs, one is able to see how there may be more non-voluntary clients in therapy than originally believed.

The stages of change model, as developed by Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente (1994), provides an additional framework to understand the clients who attend non-voluntarily. Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente's model consists of six stages: (1) precontemplation, where the client minimizes or denies the problem, perceives others as the cause of his or her difficulties, and feels compelled to seek treatment, (2) contemplation, in which the client is aware of personal difficulties, and has some belief that treatment would be useful, (3) preparation, where a sense of ambivalence is present, and the client is making the final adjustments before they begin to change, (4) action, where the client begins to take steps towards addressing his or her difficulties, (5) maintenance, in which the client has made changes and possibly has sought treatment to consolidate previous improvements, and (6) termination, where the problem no longer presents difficulty and the client has complete confidence in functioning without a relapse (McConnaughy, DiClemente, Prochaska, & Velicer, 1989; Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 1994). The Precontemplation stage, whereby the client denies the need for change and he or she feels a sense of coercion into treatment rather than experiencing internal choices to change, describes the non-voluntary client. Indeed, using this model, O'Hare (1996) found that over 10 times as many court ordered than voluntary clients were classified as precontemplators, and he suggested that the stages of change model may provide a more refined way in which to discriminate client motivation to change than by using the external referral source alone. Furthermore, McConnaughy and his colleagues suggest that the prognosis for clients who are in the Precontemplative stage is that they are more likely to terminate prematurely or be resistant during treatment.

For the purposes of this study, non-voluntary clients will be defined as those who feel pressured or coerced by agencies, other persons, or outside events to attend professional help. Furthermore, this definition includes those clients who perceive a significant amount of pressure in their lives through the losses they would incur if they were not to attend therapy.

The Experience of Non-voluntary Attendance in Counselling

Although there are few empirical studies, some researchers have speculated that clients who attend non-voluntarily share some similar aspects of their experience. Behroozi (1992) maintains that attending non-voluntarily gives rise to the characteristic of reluctance, even if it is a symbol that one is trying to assert control over one's destiny (Riordan, Matheny, & Harris,1978), or maintain a sense of personal integrity over threats to self-image (Larrabee, 1982). Additionally, Perlman (1979) argues that clients who attend non-voluntarily perceive themselves as having been coerced to succumb to unwelcome judgment set by others. As a result, they may feel like a failure or incompetent (Oxley, 1981). Non-voluntary clients may also feel angry that others have judged them incompetent to handle their own problems (Ritchie, 1986) or they may experience a loss of control or freedom (Harris & Watkins, 1987).

Guillebeaux, Storm, and Demaris (1986) found that hesitant men who sought marriage and family therapy considered price, recommendation from others, distance, type of center, and therapist's reputation as important features in choosing a therapist. They also found that four factors predicted receptivity to therapy: prior experience with therapy, having a wife threaten divorce, non-traditional early childhood socialization, and experience of marital problems. Despite their small and homogenous sample, Guillebeaux et al. recommended from their findings that most men who were initially reluctant to attend therapy became less resistant once they were involved.

Kottler and Uhlemann (1994) argue that characteristics attributed to non-voluntary clients, especially "reluctance," can be created by the therapist. Kottler and Uhlemann propose that resistant clients, such as those who have been coerced into therapy, oftentimes provoke unresolved and personal issues in the therapist. As such, they suggest that, "acknowledging the existence of a difficult client often speaks to the characteristics of the practitioner as well as the characteristic of the client" (p. 6). Indeed, Noonan (1998) supports this notion by emphasizing that both therapist expectations and affective needs impact the treatment process. For example, clients are considered problematic or difficult if they do not conform to the therapist's expectation of therapy (Brandchaft & Stolorow, 1984; Schafer, 1983), or what it means to be a client (Bugental, 1987). This premise is paradoxical, however, because the therapist determines who is resistant, and once ascribed, the resistance exists (Mahrer, Murphy, Gagnon, & Gingras, 1994). Similarly, Mahrer et al. (1994) assert that many times the therapist is the cause of resistance, especially when they construct a role that the client is to fulfill, or when the therapist wants the client to behave in a certain way. Langs (1981) encapsulates this concept well when he stated, "it is incumbent upon the therapist to ascertain his own contribution to each resistance before dealing with those sources which arise within the patient" (p. 540). Consequently, one can see how therapist expectations can become detrimental when working with clients who are attending non-voluntarily, as they may oftentimes fail to acknowledge the voluntary continuum, thereby expecting a coerced client to behave like their voluntary counterparts. As a result it is not currently known the ratio of therapists who agree or reflect about their contributions to a difficult dyad compared to those therapists who label the client and say, "Oh that one? He's a hard case, quite difficult and resistant." Additionally, Slonim-Nevo (1996) argues that counter-transference by therapists can become a significant issue when working with non-voluntary clients, for example, feelings of hopelessness, punitive fantasies, as well as resentment, and these reactions may hinder the therapist's ability to help the client (Schottenfeld, 1989). As such, one can begin to see that therapist variables can significantly affect the perception of the non-voluntary client in counselling.

Presently, there is little research that examines the experience of non-voluntary attendance in counselling from the client's perspective. Thus far, the literature is largely speculative in nature, regarding this experience. Consequently, it is the aim of this current research to explore this understudied phenomenon.

Therapeutic Outcomes with Non-voluntary Clients

Voluntary clients are seldom distinguished from their non-voluntary counterparts (Rooney, 1992), which has significant implications for outcome research regarding therapeutic success. In fact, many studies of voluntary clients probably include many non-voluntary clients (Rooney, 1992). Consequently, by failing to distinguish the level of client voluntarism, the reliability of research findings on therapeutic success becomes blurred.

Brehm and Smith (1986) concluded in their review of the psychological outcome literature that there is no support for the belief that successful therapeutic outcomes are more difficult to achieve with non-voluntary clients. In reaching their conclusion, Brehm and Smith drew upon four studies, all of which contained mitigating flaws. In one of the studies reviewed, Gove and Fain (1977) found that legally committed psychotic patients were as amenable to treatment as non-legally committed patients, also referred to as "voluntary patients." This would suggest that they found no difference between voluntary and committed patients in terms of responsiveness to treatment. However, Gove and Fain failed to explicitly differentiate their voluntary and legally committed patients used in the study, and left the responsibility to the reader to assume that voluntary patients were defined by their willingness to commit themselves. This would suggest that these clients were on the extreme end of the voluntary continuum advocating for self-imposed hospitalization. Yet, Gove and Fain acknowledged that some of their voluntary patients were not attending treatment completely through their own volition. In fact, more than double the number of voluntary patients, compared to committed patients, were significantly influenced by their family physician (49.7%) or psychiatrist (19.3%) to initiate hospitalization, and of the married voluntary patients, 72.7% were significantly influenced by their spouse. Therefore, within Gove and Fain's "voluntary" population, a significant level of non-voluntarism is clearly visible. In actuality, it could be argued that this study may be comparing involuntary patients with non-voluntary patients. Thus a more defensible conclusion is that non-voluntary and involuntary patients do not differ in their amenability to hospitalization. Another limitation of this study was that all of the data generated by Gove and Fain were dependent on ratings made by attending psychiatrists, and there was no indication of client perception of their own improvement.

Spensley, Edwards and White (1980) and Goldenberg, Smith, and Townes (1980) attempted to address this latter limitation by surveying levels of satisfaction of involuntary and voluntary patients and measuring their behavioral improvement. In both of the studies there was no significant difference between involuntary and voluntary patients. However, similar to Gove and Fain, their populations were poorly defined with respect to voluntarism. In fact, the distinctions between voluntary and involuntary patients were absent, once again leaving the reader to assume that these patients were either very willing or not at all willing to be in treatment. Once more, it appears that the researchers failed to acknowledge that voluntarism exists on a continuum, particularly, when considering patients in psychiatric hospitals. Although only speculation from a practical standpoint, it is difficult to forecast patients committing themselves on a completely voluntary basis. It would appear more likely, as in the study of Gove and Fain, that there were a number of mitigating factors which significantly influenced their attendance, such as pressures from spouses, doctors, or psychiatrists. Overall, these studies are weak given that the researchers failed to consider the levels of voluntarism, which raises the questions as to who they were actually surveying and measuring, respectively.

In the remaining study, Bastien and Adelman (1984) found that outcomes were less predicted by the level of voluntarism than the process of interaction between the therapist and the client. This latter finding is not entirely surprising given the broad understanding in the helping profession that a strong therapeutic alliance makes a significant contribution to the success of therapy (Behroozi, 1992; Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Luborsky, Crits-Christoph, Mintz, & Auerbach, 1988; Orlinsky & Howard, 1986). As such, by stating that the level of voluntarism was less predictive of outcome than the therapeutic relationship is not saying much. Furthermore, in their study, Bastien and Adelman separated "court referred" and "non-mandated" patients on the basis of admissions information, which they failed to outline in the report, but noted all participants were adolescents in private social rehabilitation facility who were referred by probation services, public social services, schools, mental health professional, and parents. By the virtue of their age, combined with the sources of referral, it could be likely that some, if not all of the "non-mandated" population were attending this facility under pressure or coercion. As such, these two populations likely could be more similar than acknowledged. In fact, the court-referred patients did not differ significantly from the non-mandated patients regarding perceived choice about being in treatment; although, overall perceived choice about the treatment process was correlated with progress in treatment. This finding is consistent with having coerced patients both within the non-mandated and court-referred populations, and the overall finding may suggest that non-voluntary clients who perceive choice might have more favorable outcomes than those who perceive no choice.

Overall, Brehm and Smith's (1986) conclusion that successful therapeutic outcomes are not more difficult to achieve with non-voluntary clients rests on shaky ground, as the studies they relied on failed to consider voluntarism on a continuum. All four studies had a mixture of voluntary, non-voluntary, and involuntary patients within their study populations, which consequently hindered the validity of the overall results.

Therapeutic Alliance and Voluntarism

Successful treatment involves the development of a strong therapeutic alliance (Beutler, Machado, Allstetter Neufeldt, 1994; Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Luborsky, Crits-Christoph, Mintz, & Auerbach, 1988; Orlinsky & Howard, 1986) and it is generally accepted in the counselling profession that this relationship is integral to the process of therapy (Behroozi, 1992). Luborsky, Singer, and Luborsky, (1975) as well as Smith and Glass (1977) demonstrated, through their meta-analysis of therapy outcome studies, that there is not one treatment paradigm that is more beneficial than another. Consequently, researchers began to examine aspects that were common within all treatment paradigms of therapy and Bordin (1979, 1994) argued that a positive therapeutic alliance is prevalent in all successful helping endeavors. Bordin (1979) defined the alliance into three essential components: interpersonal bonds, agreement on the goals of therapy, and collaboration on therapeutic tasks. When considering the work with non-voluntary clients one can see how the therapeutic alliance could be potentially hindered due to a lack of agreement between the therapist and client on goals and tasks. Clients entering therapy non-voluntarily are defined by the circumstances that lead them into therapy, including a sense of pressure or coercion. As a result, one can speculate that client goals may not exist or be ambiguous, as their attendance is a reaction to some type of external pressure. However, the counsellor may label the client "reluctant" and, through a theory – based perspective, develop goals and tasks that are incompatible with the client's presence in therapy. Thus, the therapeutic alliance becomes jeopardized. Furthermore, collaboration between the client and the therapist may be harder to establish, given the increased likelihood for a stalemate on problem identification and goal setting.

In the development of the therapeutic alliance, numerous studies have clearly established that an early alliance is a significant predictor of therapy outcome (Bachelor & Horvath, 1999). There appears to be a "window of opportunity" during the initial stages of therapy to establish a workable relationship, or else the client may prematurely terminate therapy (Mohl, Martinez, Ticknor, Huang, & Cordell, 1991; Tracey, 1986). Considering the fragile nature of the non-voluntary client's entrance into therapy, it would appear that close attention is essential at the beginning of therapy with non-voluntary clients, as they are more likely to be predisposed to withdraw prematurely, compared to their voluntary counterparts. Furthermore, clients' perceptions of the therapeutic alliance are more predictive of outcome than the counsellor's perspective (Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Lambert & Bergin, 1994), and so it would appear integral to address the non-voluntary client's perceptions and attitudes of the therapeutic relationship.

Schottenfeld (1989) argues that the effects of coercion on the therapeutic alliance are nearly of the same magnitude for the non-voluntary client and the court mandated client because the failure to comply with treatment may result in equally severe sanctions (p.172). That is, although the court mandated client may lose their physical freedom by returning to jail for a breach of attending therapy, the non-voluntary client may suffer a relative loss of the same magnitude, e.g., being thrown out of the house, losing a job, being denied access to the children. However, integral to Schottenfeld's argument is that the severity of the consequences of avoiding treatment for the non-voluntary client is dependent on their perception of the potential loss. Consequently, the power differential between the client and the therapist is greater when the perceived loss is more severe. If the therapist were to address or at the very least acknowledge the power differential with a non-voluntary client, according to Schottenfeld, it would be the responsibility of the therapist to further inquire about perceived risks and costs of avoiding treatment.

Issues Related to an Underdeveloped Knowledge Base

Given that research has failed to delineate the non-voluntary client from the voluntary client, "the voluntary client continues to be the most taught about, written about, and the most desired part of practice" (Rooney, 1992, p. 11). Thus, as therapists use voluntary clients as a frame of reference, less attention is being paid to client variables and even less on client voluntarism. As a result, little is actually known about the process of therapy with non-voluntary clients (Solnim-Nevo, 1996).

Rooney (1992) argues that there are at least four consequences to not having a solid knowledge base for working with non-voluntary clients. First he suggested that there is no coherent theoretical and empirical base to guide practitioners to work with non-voluntary clients. As a result, many therapists may be trying to ineffectively generalize what they have learned about working with voluntary clients to those who are attending non-voluntarily. Second, Rooney argues that practitioners have little understanding about the non-voluntary transaction between the client and therapist, and as a result practitioners have little guidance in which interventions are, "legal, ethical, and effective" (p. 13). Third, Rooney proposes that the difficult fit of non-voluntary clients into the voluntary client framework contributes to the practitioner blaming the client or labeling the client as "difficult" or "resistant." Lastly, Rooney suggests that practitioners may be held responsible or expected to change client attitudes in a way that would violate ethical or legal principles through the pressure faced by the referring agency.

Consequently, the existing literature has rarely acknowledged that voluntarism exists on a continuum, thereby, clouding the qualitative differences in the process of therapy among voluntary, non-voluntary clients, and involuntary clients. Because the voluntary framework continues to be the most widely taught, and utilized, including being contrasted with the involuntary clients, the non-voluntary client continues to be understudied and under-acknowledged in the literature. In essence, the helping profession has begun to recognize that non-voluntary clients exist, but the tendency is to label them as "resistant" before acknowledging their place on the voluntary continuum. As a result, the research has yet to agree on the parameters of which to describe those who attend therapy non-voluntarily. Some have argued that the level of motivation or the level of resistance is the critical factor, however, others have argued that these are just labels that the therapist assigns.

Therefore, given the limited knowledge concerning the process of therapy and lack of theoretical framework for working with clients who attend non-voluntarily, it is the purpose of this study to explore this understudied phenomenon. Through a discovery-oriented approach, the goals are to acknowledge that voluntarism exists on a continuum and to understand the nature of non-voluntary counselling.

Theoretical Review

In this section, a review of related theories and psychological contributions is presented in order to provide other considerations that may contribute to understanding clients' voluntarism in counselling. Additionally, an examination of related psychological literature helps to provide a framework, as a synthesis of perspectives often creates a more thorough understanding than any one theory alone. Therefore, from an expansive perspective, a number of concepts within the theoretical literature are presented, providing additional viewpoints from which to consider the non-voluntary client.

In the psychologically based literature, Jones (1990) discusses how the Transactional Analysis' Game Theory provides a framework for understanding difficult therapeutic interactions with clients, such as those who are attending non-voluntarily. Although this theory does not speak to the impact of voluntarism on the client in itself, it does suggest that unmotivated clients are frequently excellent "game players." Jones describes the Game Theory as it relates to therapy by having the illusion of problem solving; however, the interactions between the therapist and the client are, in fact, working against productive communications. Schiff (1975) argues that "games" begin with passive client behaviors where the client discounts (1) the problem itself, (2) the significance of the problem, (3) options or solutions, or (4) the people's ability to behave differently. Schiff suggests that these behaviors are passive because the energy is not used to solve the problems, but rather to hook the therapist into solving their problems for them. Similarly, Jones states,

> One of the most common ways professionals become involved in games with clients is to try to contract for change in client behaviors when clients are not convinced that a problem exists, let alone that it needs to be worked on (p. 123).

Accordingly, Jones' recommendations would likely expand to working with non-voluntary clients. She advises that, as the "rescuer," the therapist would encourage the client's passivity and the problems would ultimately remain unresolved. Thus, Jones suggests that the therapist recognize and redirect the ownership of the problems to the client in order to avoid falling into the rescuer role.

Therapy with non-voluntary clients can also be understood through the philosophies of Modernism and Postmodernism. When applied to counselling, both of these philosophies recognize that the way in which clients perceive themselves are not objectively true. Furthermore, both of these philosophies have traceable roots in Constructivism, which postulates that knowledge is constructed from experience and learning is a personal interpretation of the world. Thus, when applied to non-voluntary clients, importance is emphasized regarding their subjective experience of being in counselling. However, Modernism and Postmodernism differ when applied to counselling theories in that, unlike postmodern theory, modernism assumes that the client will become well by developing a more objective self appraisal through the process of therapy (Fidelibus, 2000). This philosophy is apparent in counselling theories such as Glasser's Reality Therapy and Adlerian theory, in that the therapist's judgement and value-determined appraisal of the client's difficulties are necessary and functional in helping the client change, e.g., helping the client find more effective ways of living and challenging the client's basic premises and goals. Thus, the therapist's interpretation of the client's narrative is integral to moving towards an objective truth recognized by the therapist. On the contrary, the Postmodernists view the therapist's construction of the client's narrative is no more true that the client's perspective, nor does the therapist try to compare the client's narrative to any standard of truth. This philosophical tenet is shared by counselling theories pioneered by persons such as Fritz Perls and Carl Rogers, where the person's story is not measured to an objective truth. Instead one of the most important features in both these aforementioned theories is to help the client become whole and experience feelings that were previously denied access. Concepts founded within the Perls' Gestalt Theory such as "avoidance" and "blocked energy" may help the therapist to understand the non-voluntary client who may be resistant or difficult to reach. However, caution is noted as these terms are at the disposal of the therapist, which may label the client prematurely without considering the level of voluntarism. Similarly, in Roger's Person Centered Theory, the non-voluntary client may be experiencing blocked feelings, and through the therapeutic relationship the client is able to self-actualize those feelings; however, examining the level of client voluntarism may also provide for greater understanding.

Turning to social psychology, theories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation provide another perspective in which to understand non-voluntary clients. Deci and Ryan (1985), in their Self-Determination Theory, describe extrinsic motivation as performing an action because it leads to separable outcomes. Further, extrinsically motivated behavior is in contrast with intrinsically motivated behavior, as the latter is done for the pleasure and satisfaction of its own sake. Thus, a feasible argument could be made that a client's non-voluntary attendance is extrinsically motivated. That is, the client's movement into counselling is not based on self-determination and attendance is influenced by the perception of sanctions or constraints. This definition is consistent with Rooney's (1992) assertion that non-voluntary clients feel pressured or coerced by agencies, other persons, or outside events to attend professional help.

Deci and Ryan's (1985) Orgasmic Integration Theory postulates four types of external motivation: (1) external regulation, (2) introjected regulation, (3) identified regulation, and (4) integrated regulation. In the external regulation model, behavior is regulated through rewards or constraints and the person experiences a sense of obligation, including feeling controlled by the reward or constraint. When applied to the non-voluntary client, it would appear that the external regulation model would fit quite well to describe the interaction between the client, their attendance in counselling, and the level of voluntarism as it relates to perceived rewards or constraints. In Deci and Ryan's introjected model, the person internalizes the reasons for their actions, and the rewards or constraints are imposed by the individual and not by others. This definition, too, may apply to the non-voluntary client, as they may accept their difficulties on some level; however, the perception of rewards or constraints is still evident, although they have been internalized. The remaining two models of regulation would least apply to the non-voluntary client, at least initially, as they are connected by a sense of self-determination and the behaviors are consistent with the individual's self-concept.

When behavior models are evaluated using Deci and Ryan's theories regarding external motivation, the results suggest that external regulation and introjection were slightly negatively related to outcomes (Vallerand, Blais, Brière, & Pelletier, 1989). Additionally, Vallerand and Bissonnette (1992) demonstrated that those who persisted on a task were more intrinsically motivated at the beginning than those who dropped out. These results may have some applicability to working with non-voluntary clients, where predictions on remaining in counselling and counselling outcomes may be influenced by not only their level of voluntarism but as well by their level of extrinsic motivation. Deci (1971) also argues that with respect to constrained behavior, external motivation would be expected to influence subsequent behavior. Thus, in the context of non-voluntary clients, future attendance in counselling may be affected by their level of external motivation during their counselling experience.

Ryan and Connell (1989) found in their study of extrinsic motivation that attitudes and adjustment were associated with different types of motivation. For example, the externally regulated person was more likely to blame others for negative outcomes, which is compatible with their perception of being coerced into action and laying the onus of their actions onto someone else. Also, Ryan and Connell found that introjected regulators were positively related to effort; however, they were also more related to anxiety and poor coping with failure. Thus a non-voluntary client who falls into the introjected category may show good effort; however, he or she may also be anxious and be significantly more so affected by perceived failure in counselling. Ryan and Deci (2000) also found that the more autonomous the extrinsic motivation (e.g. identified regulators or integrated regulators) the greater the engagement, performance, psychological well being, and higher quality of learning occurred.

Another aspect of motivation theory that may contribute to the better understanding of the non-voluntary client relates to Ryan and Deci's (2000) argument that the primary reason for people to engage in externally motivated behavior is to feel connected with those who value the behavior. Deci and Ryan labeled this concept the need for "relatedness." They stated,

> Because extrinsically motivated behaviors are not inherently interesting and thus must initially be externally prompted, the primary reason people are likely to be willing to do the behavior is that they are valued by significant others to whom they feel (or would like to feel) connected, whether that be a family, a peer group, or a society (p. 64).

Thus, applying the concept of Deci and Ryan's desire for relatedness may suggest important implications regarding the role and function that the referral source will play on the non-voluntary client's movement into therapy. Further, Deci and Ryan also argue that once the individual feels supported, competent, autonomous, and related, then the motivation is more likely to shift from being externally regulated to internally regulated and more self-determined.

In essence, psychological theories and counselling paradigms have yet to speak directly to the issue of voluntarism in the literature. However, there appears to be some applicability in the present theoretical literature, which helps to augment the understanding of clients who attend counselling non-voluntarily.

Method

The choice of methodology was decided on the basis of the research question, "What is men's experience of non-voluntary counselling?" To answer this question, the phenomenological method, with its emphasis on interpretation of meaning and understanding from the individual's perspective, was considered most appropriate. This method is exploratory in nature and seeks to discover how a phenomenon is experienced through the individual's position in everyday life. It was the intention of this study to examine men's experience of non-voluntary counselling through a holistic approach that would integrate many facets of their experience instead of studying just one particular aspect. Therefore, it did not seem that a quantitative approach would best capture the nuances and personal reflections that is the essence of a discovery-oriented approach. It was believed that by reducing personal experiences into checklists and numbers, the results would have excluded the details that are paramount in understanding people's experiences. Furthermore, because of the limited research available regarding the study of non-voluntary clients, a discovery oriented approach was felt to be best suited for this question.

The Nature of Phenomenology Research

The phenomenological method differs most essentially from the natural sciences approach in that the latter considers the participant to be an object in the world and the former perceives both the participant and his or her world as active in the process of creating individualized meaning. That is, in phenomenology, the person and his or her own world are believed to "co-constitute" one another (Valle & King, 1978). Furthermore, Valle and King suggested that the person's reality is only true within the context of the world and vice versa. As such, Valle and King termed this interdependence as "being-in-the-world" rather than merely "being."

As such, the study of phenomenology strives to elucidate, from the participant, both the personal world and his or her consciousness of it. That is, the process of phenomenology strives to understand personal awareness and the meaning that is created from it. Ideally, this awareness, which can occur on many levels, e.g., awareness of personal memories to awareness of physical objects, will lead to the understanding of personal experience.

In order to understand personal meaning, the process of phenomenology uses first person descriptions from the participants. Therefore, the phenomenological researcher depends on the participant's natural language to delve into his or her life-world. According to Giorgi (1986), the descriptive approach is used to gain the facts of a given experience to illustrate their meaning. As such, words and sentences provide descriptions which convey the meaning of the person's experience.

The goal of phenomenological research is to reveal the essence of the structure that makes up the experience of a particular phenomenon. Polkinghorne (1989) argued that the "essence" is a necessary and invariant aspect of the phenomenon that makes the phenomenon what it is. Therefore, it is the essence of the phenomenon that the researcher is striving to discover and make clear to all. However, the analysis of the participant's natural language descriptions requires "disciplined naivete" (Wertz, 1984). That is, the researcher must be critically open to the participant's experience, while suspending all assumptions about the nature of the phenomenon being investigated. In this way, all the unknown aspects of the phenomenon are open to discovery.

At this point it is important to mention that the shared structural description across participants must be established a posteriori. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings will be proven universal if others, who have shared a similar experience of the phenomenon being investigated, find connection with the present findings (Osborne, 1990).

Bracketing

As previously mentioned, the phenomenological researcher must be critically open to the experience of the participant in order to uncover the essence of the phenomenon. The researcher is the tool of analysis, however, the "knowing" of the phenomenon through personal and academic sources may cloud the essence being studied. Consequently, an integral part in the phenomenological process is for the researcher to bracket any presuppositions or attitudes towards the phenomenon being studied in order to understand the phenomenon as expressed by the participant. By bracketing the researcher attempts to suspend his or her natural attitude so that the researcher's assumptions are as clear as possible to his or herself (Valle & King, 1978). It must be noted that bracketing is never complete, but rather it is a continuous process of spiraling in which exposing presuppositions often lead to additional assumptions being revealed through reflection and awareness. As a result, these additional assumptions are then bracketed, leading to more discovery, and so on. Consequently, the researcher can never fully be aware of all of his or her presuppositions. However, every effort is made throughout the process of phenomenological investigation to approach the data with as little personal bias as possible.

Bracketing: Outlining My Presuppositions

Prior to engaging in this project, I reflected on how I became interested in men's experience of non-voluntary counselling. My interest in this topic was influenced through my previous work as a probation officer. While working in this capacity, I experienced several memorable clients who had been mandated to counselling and often reflected on their own experience, typically using several strings of expletives. In particular, I can remember an adult male client who had a great deal disdain for the process, but felt "trapped" by having to attend therapy or risk the revocation of his sentence and return to jail. Often I heard from other male clients that counselling was a, "waste of time" and they were, "jumping through the hoops" in order to complete their terms of probation. As such it became increasingly discouraging to see the lack of impact these counselling sessions were making.

When I began my training as a therapist, I also began to sense a common perception among counsellors that, typically, any man attending couple's counselling was being dragged in by his heels. There were many instances in which this appeared to be true, and I often thought about what it would be like to be that man in therapy. When I tried to step into his shoes, it appeared that the counselling was not legally mandated, nor did it feel like there was a gun pointed at my head as an overt motivation. However, I did sense a covert feeling of obligation that was silently compelling me to attend as I shuffled into the counselling room.

Consequently, I began to wonder what would make the counselling experience of these men more worthwhile, to a point where they wouldn't feel like they were just biding time and waiting for therapy to end. Initially I thought that I could answer my own questions by reading the vast amount of literature that has provided guidance for working with "reluctant" or "difficult" clients. However, as I began to realize the scarcity of information on the topic it felt quite unsuitable to rely on literature that was fashioned within a voluntary framework. I felt that if I were to rely solely on the literature, I was looking down the nose of counselling theory and reflecting back to these male clients that, "this is the way that any counselling should proceed because these experts are saying so." As a result, I felt a sense of injustice to these clients by depending on "experts" who hadn't studied the opinions of non-voluntary clients. Thus, I discovered that I wanted to understand their experience of counselling through the client's perspective to understand why they felt the way they did about counselling. I believe that once I can gain a better understanding of their experience, I will be able to be a more effective counsellor. In a sense, I believe that by putting the client on a level plain and stating that their experience is as important to understanding the process of therapy as any theory, we will better be able to help our clients.

From my experience as a probation officer and therapist in training, it is critical that I demand of myself to be rigorously aware of how my experiences will likely influence the collection and analysis of my data. Given that the data is viewed and interpreted by myself, the researcher, I must attempt to identify and suspend all presuppositions that I hold regarding the phenomenon. By engaging in bracketing, I attempt to approach the research process with a minimum of interpretive bias, as well as providing the reader with a description of the ground from which I stand.

I believe that a sense of trust and empathetic rapport, as described by classical Rogerian theory, promotes an environment in which the client feels safe, respected and supported. I believe that by offering this kind of relationship to a non-voluntary client, there is a greater likelihood that a supportive relationship will emerge and the client will feel like an active part of the therapy process;

I have realized that the label "non-voluntary" or "involuntary" takes away from the person's experience of being a recognized as a valued client, and this label has the ability to minimizes his experience to feel hurt, pain, frustration, and anger. I believe that in numerous circumstances, the person is thought of primarily as an unwilling client, which can negatively affect the process of therapy;

Furthermore, I believe that when therapists do not consider the level of voluntarism of the client, fundamental misconceptions are more likely to occur, impeding the process of therapy. The therapist has the power to label the client "difficult" or "resistant," which in turn affects their perception of the client and how therapy is to proceed. I believe that when the therapist engages in this labeling, a step back needs to be taken by the therapist by reflecting on how they are contributing to the "resistance."

I also believe that therapy with non-voluntary clients can be successful, however, the success can not be measured by the same qualities that are used with a voluntary client. Progress is possible, but it may be more subtle or more directed around a willingness to engage in therapy, that will eventually lead to change in a non-voluntary client.

Although I do not specifically anticipate any clear findings at this point in the research process, I believe that my presuppositions may influence the way in which I will interpret the data. I may be more likely to focus on the client's perception of the therapeutic relationship, given my aforementioned belief, and as such I will need to be stringent in remaining true to the clients' spoken words. I also may have difficulties, at times, moving away from the label of the "non-voluntary" client and all the impediments to this label. Intrinsically, I will need to be constantly aware of how labels can affect not only a therapeutic relationship, but also a participant – researcher relationship.

The Screening Questionnaire – Use and Rationale

Participants for this study were selected on the basis of their responses to a screening questionnaire, listed below.

Table 1
Screening Questionnaire

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1. Approximately when did you commence counselling at the University of Alberta Education Clinic?
2. Describe your reasons for attending counselling (please be specific, if possible).
3. Was there anybody else in your life who encouraged or advised you to attend counselling? If yes, please go to question #4. If no, please go to question #6.
4. Please describe your relationship with the person(s).
5. How did the person(s) influence your decision to attend counselling?
6. Have you ever received psychological services in the past? If yes, please describe.

The screening questionnaire was developed to identify males who were attending counselling on the advice or encouragement of someone else in their lives. The questionnaire was also used to identify the level or voluntarism and to ascertain their willingness to engage in therapy. It was felt that those men who acknowledged that their attendance was significantly influence by external motivators would be successful candidates for this study. In contrast, those men who indicated that they were attending counselling through their own volition were considered to be inappropriate candidates for the purposes of this study. In essence, the purpose of the screening questionnaire was to isolate externally motivated, non-voluntary clients from their internally motivated, voluntary counterparts. Furthermore, a screening questionnaire was used to save both the clients' and the researcher's time in scheduling interview sessions that may have otherwise been prolonged in nature, through the necessary establishment of rapport, interview process, and analysis of responses.

It is important to emphasize that the screening questionnaire was used as a criterion for assessing potential participants for this study. Consequently, it did not influence the execution of the study once the participants were selected. That is, it did not jeopardize the process of the phenomenological process, (e.g., bracketing, data collection, data analysis).

Participants

Participants were recruited from a client database that was maintained through the University of Alberta Education Clinic (hereafter referred to as the Clinic) and were selected on the basis of their participation in counselling and willingness to engage in research. A number of other criteria that were specific to this study were also used to select participants. First, participants were required to be male clients in counselling. Although female clients could have been used in this study, it was felt that male clients are generally more of a minority in counselling, and would therefore be more likely to have experience with the phenomenon being investigated. Additionally, the impetus of this study was born out of the researcher's personal experience with male clients, which consequently encouraged the present participant selection process. Second, the participants were required to be adult clients. The rationale behind selecting on the basis of age was two-fold in nature. Primarily, adults were required for this study because they are at the age of consent and would be less likely to attending counselling under the direction of a parent. Although parental pressure would constitute an external motivating factor to attend counselling, thereby making attendance non-voluntary, the majority of underage clients may have met this criterion, thereby exploding the number of potential participants. As such, it would have been more difficult to limit the number of participants to the study as well as clearly define the nature of their non-voluntary status. The second reason for choosing adult clients was on the basis of maturity and self-awareness. In phenomenological research one of the most important aspects is the participant's ability to provide rich descriptions of the phenomenon being investigated (Osborne, 1990). As such, it was felt that adult clients would be better able to verbalize and reflect on their experiences than those clients who were under the age of majority. Third, the participants were required to be attending counselling for personal issues. It was felt that clients attending for vocational issues or personal growth would more likely be attending counselling by their own choice, and would be less likely to have experience with the phenomenon being investigated. Fourth, participants had to be attending counselling under the direction or advice of someone else in their lives. As described earlier, the level of external motivation and non-voluntary status were measured using the screening questionnaire.

In terms of gathering participants, first a list of clients was generated from the Clinic database that met the aforementioned criteria. Potential participants were then contacted by the researcher via the telephone and were asked about their willingness to participate in the present research study. Upon verbal consent, the potential participants were asked to arrive 10 minutes early to their next counselling appointment in order to complete the screening questionnaire. It should be noted that not all potential participants were able to be contacted through the telephone, and in these cases they were approached to participate in this study as they waited in the reception area of the Clinic, prior to their appointment. Only participants whose responses showed a clear and identifiable external motivator that influenced their attendance were selected. Potential participants whose responses on the screening questionnaire were questionable or vague were eliminated from the participant selection process. However, it is also noted that of the four participants who were selected to participate in the full extent of the study, all were contacted and introduced to the researcher via the telephone prior to completing the screening questionnaire.

It should be noted that in the phenomenological method, there is not a required number of participants for a study. Instead, it is the researcher's discretion as to how many participants he or she feels is necessary in order to illuminate the phenomenon being investigated (Becker, 1986; Wertz, 1984). For this study, four participants were considered adequate in achieving the goal of illumination.

Data Collection

In this study, the data was collected through a series of researcher – participant interviews. This format of verbal expression was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, by engaging in a verbal interview, it allows for the detection of non-verbal cues such as rate of speech, body posture and eye contact that provide a richer context to the data than simply having the participants describe their experience on paper. Additionally, this style of data collection was selected to provide the opportunity to ask the participants for elaboration in areas that were overlooked in their discourse (Wertz, 1984). With regards to the process of collecting the data, three interviews were used.

The Structuring Interview

In this interview, the objective was to build rapport with the participants individually and to provide each participant with a letter outlining the nature of the study (Appendix A), and discuss any questions that they had. During this informal meeting, the researcher's interest in the study was discussed, and each participant was advised that this project was a partial requirement for a Master of Education degree. Also, each participant was provided with a consent form (Appendix B), which each signed, and the issues of confidentiality and permission to withdraw without prejudice were explained. Ethical approval for this consent form was obtained from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. Upon signing the consent form, each participant was then asked to complete the screener questionnaire, that evaluated their level of external motivation to attend counselling. Participants were selected on the basis of their responses, which indicated that a sense of external coercion and some reluctance to attend therapy. Four participants were asked to engage in a further interview, at their convenience, to discuss their experience in counselling. This initial interview also provided an opportunity to establish rapport and evaluate each potential participant's ability to draw on their experience in counselling.

The Data Gathering Interview

During this phase of the interview process the data was gathered regarding each participant's lived experience of counselling. The interview was held in a private counselling room at the University of Alberta Education Clinic, and was free of distractions for the duration of the interview. During this meeting, an interview schedule was used (Appendix C), however, the questions were open-ended in nature, which allowed free expression of thoughts, and minimized any influence that dichotomous or closed questions would create.

Before starting the interview, time was given to settle the participant by creating rapport and an environment conducive to sharing. This included asking each participant about any further questions, and to assure him that there were no "right" or "wrong" answers. During the interview, the researcher referred both to the guide of questions (Appendix C), and to the conversation itself. At times, elaboration was requested or further questioned from the participant when his expression was unclear or it appeared that further discussion was necessary.

This second set of meetings lasted approximately 50 to 70 minutes. The interview was ended when the participant began to repeat himself and the interview guide had been exhausted. The conversation was tape recorded (with participant's permission), and it was later transcribed verbatim.

The Corroborative Interview

In this last stage of the data collection process, each of the participants was contacted through the telephone and advised that the description of their overall experience in counselling had been sent in the mail, along with the identified themes for that participant. Approximately 10 days afterwards, the participants were individually contacted and a telephone interview was held, which lasted roughly 15 to 30 minutes. During this time, the participants were invited to give feedback and check for any violation of confidentiality. The participants were also asked to comment on whether any part of their experience was not reflected in the description. As a result of this interview, minor changes suggested by the participants were incorporated into the situated descriptions to more clearly reflect their experience.

Data Analysis

During this phase a number of steps were required in order to produce a final situated description. In analyzing the data, the combined the methods of both Colaizzi (1978) and Osborne (1990) were used. This integrated method is described below.

1. The data gathering interview was tape recorded and transcribed. Attention was paid to the participant's rate of speech, and tone of voice, including special attention to emphasis on particular words and phrases.
2. Upon transcription, the final product, also known as the protocol, was read several times to get a feel for the overall understanding of each participant's experience. During this time notes were made next to any of the participants' statements that appeared relevant or interesting in regards to their experience of counselling. Some of the notes contained vague interpretations, others included associations of thought, and others involved brief summaries of their dialogue.
3. Next, phrases or statements that seemed meaningful to the phenomenon being studied were extracted from the individual protocols. It is here where the researcher makes a leap from what is being said to what the participant means (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59).
4. Upon extraction, each of the "significant statements" was paraphrased while carefully remaining consistent with the individual protocols. This step, as described by Osborne (1990), allowed me to focus and refine the statement into typically fewer and more precise words than what are contained in the protocols.

5. A theme (or themes) was then created on the basis of each significant statement. This process of interpretation creates first order themes, in which Colaizzi (1978) referred to as "creative insight," whereby the researcher moves beyond the protocol and creates meaning in what the participant has said (p. 59). In this step the researcher oscillates between the protocol and the first order theme in such a way as to not include any meaning that was not evident in the protocol. Validity, (if such a term can be used in qualitative research), is confirmed by referring the first order theme back to the original protocol where no more or no less meaning is found. It is important in this step not to "sever all connection with the original protocols" (p. 59).
6. The next step was to create higher themes of abstraction (second order themes), by organizing the first order themes into clusters of similarity. Again these second order themes were referred back to the original protocol in order to determine if they lost any meaning or moved too far beyond what was implied in the original protocol.
7. Taking into consideration both the first and second order themes, an exhaustive description was written about each participant's experience of attending counselling though external pressure, and this description is referred to as the situated structural description. This description was written in order to elucidate the structure of the phenomenon for each participant. To this point, the analysis involving each participant's experience is referred to as the "within-persons analysis."
8. In order to be true to the participant's lived experience, the situated structural description and the corresponding second ordered themes were taken back to the participant and each was asked to comment on findings. This was completed in the

corroborative interview, and adjustments were discussed and incorporated into the final situated structural description.

9. After each situated structural description was written, the researcher then went back to the higher order themes and reorganized them to create broad themes of a shared experience among the four participants. Each theme was analyzed for similarities and differences and then clustered into third ordered themes. Upon this final clustering, each of the new themes was taken back to the original transcript and compared for accuracy. Then, the integrated structural description was written from these third ordered themes. It is this integrated, or shared, structural description that is the most important part in a piece of phenomenological investigation. It is here where the essence of the phenomenon is revealed, without referring to the specific context of any one of the participants' experiences.
10. The shared themes were then clustered into further abstractions in order to organize the discussion of the findings. This is the highest level of abstraction and is considered to be the "between-persons analysis"

In the next section, a brief description of the participants will be discussed along with an analysis of each of the participant's experience as well as their individual situated structural description. Following the within-persons analysis will be the integrated structural description which was shared by all of the participants.

Data Analysis and Results

This section begins with a brief description of each of the participants, as well as identifying features of their non-voluntary status. Following these vignettes, analysis of each participant's thematic experience is presented along with their individual situated structural descriptions. At the end of this section, the data analysis of the themes shared by all the participants and the integrated experience are presented. It should be noted that not all the "within persons" themes were shared across participants. However, it is at this level of analysis that the common structure of the phenomenon is revealed and is released from any situated context. That is, the overall integrated experience is a more generalized description of the phenomenon that is no longer rooted in concrete instances of the phenomenon. Furthermore, verbatim excerpts will be used to help illustrate themes within the data analysis and in presenting these passages minor hesitations have been deleted for readability (e.g., repeated words, "uh"). Ellipses (. . .) indicate omitted material.

The Participants

Participants in the study were 4 male clients, ages 33 to 55 years old who were attending the Clinic, during the 1999-2000 academic school year; all were white and all spoke fluent English. They were either in current therapy or they were just recently finished therapy within a week of the data-gathering interview. The participants are listed below in the order that they were interviewed. Pseudonyms where chosen by the participants' and other identifying data has been changed in order to protect anonymity.

Plumber John, subsequently referred to as PJ, was a 55-year-old man who was on long-term disability leave from a teaching position. He described his entrance into counselling as being precipitated by an interpersonal conflict in the working environment, which led to coping difficulties and depressive episodes. PJ was referred to counselling by his medical doctor, who PJ remarked was, "quite definite that seeing a psychologist would be constructive." PJ indicated that attending counselling also filled a required component of the long-term disability (LTD) program. PJ's non-voluntary status was determined as a result of his medical doctor's referral and the LTD program's counselling component.

Bill was a 33-year-old man who had not held full-time employment in the past four years, and had not worked for more than a year since 1991. Prior to attending counselling, he participated in an employment course, where the facilitator had recommended personal counselling. Upon this recommendation Bill stated that he was, "surprised that someone suggested it . . . 'cuz I had never really thought about it before that." However, years passed before Bill initiated counselling, and throughout the process, he concealed his attendance in therapy to others. Bill's non-voluntary status was ascertained by measuring his attendance in therapy against his perception of stagnation in terms of building mature relationships in his life. Consequently, his attendance in counselling was pressured by his perception of what he was lacking in his personal life and the subsequent sense of loss if he were not to attend counselling.

Joe was a 44-year-old man who was attending counselling through the encouragement of his wife. Although he had independently considered therapy, he stated that, "to be able to come in and do stuff like this . . . is something that I never would have thought of without the help of my wife." Presenting issues in counselling included unresolved issues with his father, a history of heavy alcohol consumption, and marital concerns. Joe's non-voluntary status was defined by his wife's encouragement to attend therapy, as well as his apprehension and guardedness about the process.

Spencer was a 37-year-old man who was attending counselling to improve the relationships with his step-son. He felt burdened by a sense of responsibility to attend counselling as his wife had informed him that improvement of the family dynamics were dependent his relationship with his step-son. Additionally, Spencer related that there was the threat of marital separation if these problems could not be ameliorated. Spencer's non-voluntary status was determined by his sense of obligation to improve the difficulties within the family system and his resentment for his wife's inability to jointly attend therapy.

Analysis of PJ's Experience

From the data analysis, 9 themes were found by clustering the individual thematic abstractions. These themes were (1) Experience of Living with Depression, (2) Experience of Previous Unhelpful Therapy, (3) Attribution of Motivators to Counselling, (4) Acknowledgment of Barriers Despite Need, (5) Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling, (6) Perception of Therapeutic Essentials, (7) Expresses Desirability of Attending a Training Centre, (8) Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling, and (9) Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling. The analysis of PJ's experience is presented in Appendix D. The excerpts taken from the transcribed interview are presented in the first column and appear in the order that occurred in the interview. In the second column the paraphrasing is presented for each of the excerpts. In the third column the themes are presented to reflect the essential quality of the original excerpt. Following the presentation of excerpts, paraphrasing, and themes, the themes were then clustered into more abstract representations. The numbers that appear in brackets reflects the specific excerpt from which the theme was created. Below, each of PJ's themes will be discussed in relation to his own experience.

The Experience of Living with Depression

This domain concerned the difficulties that PJ was experiencing while living with depression. The Experience of Living with Depression is important to his overall experience in counselling, as it was one of the driving forces which precipitated his attendance. In this theme, PJ talked about his struggles of trying to garner enough energy to gather himself out of bed. He also felt frustrated by how the depression limited his daily activities and how he was no longer able to work. However, to PJ, one of the most disconcerting effects was that despite being afflicted by depression, he appeared healthy to others. He said,

> Here I am, no cast on my foot, no crushed collarbone, sitting having coffee, and laughing with people in the restaurant. And . . . they say, "There's nothing wrong with him!" Which is how I look I guess.

Furthermore, PJ was aware that he was carrying wounds that radiated through his depression. In benign situations he experienced anger bubbling to the surface, and he surprised himself in these moments. Through these experiences, he realized the seriousness of his depression.

Experience of Previous Unhelpful Therapy

Experience of Previous Unhelpful Therapy arose from PJ's earlier experience of counselling, and it was integral to his present experience because he was concerned that he would be faced with more unhelpful therapy. PJ summed up his former therapy as, "somebody would sit in a chair and ask me questions and say it would cost a hundred bucks . . . ." He also had a group therapy experience, where everybody would disclose significant amounts of personal information and again, he didn't feel that it was beneficial. In addition, PJ was looking for a therapeutic setting which involved little or no pharmaceutical treatment, as he resented his previous psychiatrist for his "heavy handed medication regime."

Attribution of Motivators to Counselling

In Attribution of Motivators to Counselling, PJ discussed the important determinants that brought him for therapy. His medical doctor suggested counselling, and because of PJ's strong sense of trust in this physician, he felt confident that his best interests were in mind. PJ stated, "I saw it as something that I wouldn't have gone to without my doctor saying, 'here do this.'" Furthermore, PJ attended counselling as component to the long term disability program, and as such he perceived it as, "Counselling at first . . . I just thought as another job I was going to have to do to try and get myself out of my mess." However, after the first session, an aspect that drew him back for the next session was the initial information he received about the counselling process. He stated, "my anxieties about it were very quickly brought down to nothing as soon as I knew what was going on here at the Clinic."

Acknowledgment of Barriers Despite Need

Acknowledgment of Barriers Despite Need was significant to PJ's experience of counselling, as he felt conflicted in his attendance. On the one hand, he realized that, "I couldn't do it on my own. I tried, and I've tried for a long time. And I didn't do it without knowledge either." However, he also was apprehensive as he found it difficult to disclose personal feelings. In addition, he expressed some apprehension by not knowing the amount of resources that would be required to engage in therapy. He stated,

> Partly I thought it would be expensive, and partly I thought I wouldn't be able to afford it, or that I couldn't put in the time required. I had some misgivings about it, and that kind of stuff.

Consequently, PJ's willingness could be described as tentative, as he was cognizant of the need for counselling; however, it was hampered by his apprehension and the unknown.

Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling

Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling was born from PJ's perception that men and women function differently within the emotional realm. As such, he was greatly relieved to find out that his counsellor was a female because, "I feel less threatened to divulge things to a female therapist than to a male . . . ." He went on to discuss how he did not believe that the same kind of beneficial relationship would have resulted if he were to have a male counsellor, including receiving the same helpful input and listening that his female counsellor provided. He also discussed a sense of openness that he felt, which he believed was a direct function of his counsellor's gender. He stated,

> I was able to tell a female counsellor all kinds of things that, that I'm sure I probably wouldn't have said to the psychiatrist or to a male counsellor.

Therefore, this theme appeared to be particularly important to PJ's experience of counselling, as it seems that his perception of counselling was significantly influenced by the gender of his counsellor.

Perception of Therapeutic Essentials

PJ identified a number of essential counsellor and relationship qualities that he perceived were relevant to his experience. He stated that his counsellor was genuine and even if she were "phoney" he would have been able to tell. He also indicated that her questioning was presented in a non threatening manner, which left him feeling that she was sensitive to his needs. Similarly, he stated that her modesty put him at ease and allowed him to explore his feelings and emotions. He stated, "maybe she gave me permission to do what I have to do, that I couldn't get from myself." Concerning his counsellor, he also discussed his belief that his counsellor was skilled and adept in facilitating communication and providing him with insights that he never would have thought of. He described it in this way,

> If I read a book about depression, there's not necessarily, there won't be ANY connection that I didn't put there. But there will be, this way, some connection that she put there.

Additionally, PJ discussed qualities in the relationship that he felt were conducive to his beneficial experience. The majority of these qualities relied on his intuitive judgment and weren't necessarily observable behaviors that the counsellor demonstrated. Nonetheless, PJ indicated that these qualities were integral to his experience. First, he discussed how he perceived a lack of arrogance from his counsellor, which positioned her in a favourable light. Second, he discussed how he intuitively sensed a connection with the counsellor as he noted, "I just knew I could work with this woman," and thereby felt a mutual connection. Last, PJ emphasized the certainty of the shared learning that he perceived to occur within the counselling process. He described it as a "fundamental" to the relationship. Consequently, through a combination of these counsellor qualities and relational factors, PJ described how he was able to willingly explore with the counsellor.

Expresses Desirability of Attending a Training Centre

This was an important component of PJ's experience as he discussed the benefits of attending a training institution. Primarily he indicated that helping a student clinician felt worthwhile to him. He also discussed the perception that healing comes from both helping and being helped. He described this symbiotic effect as, "even though I'm here to be helped, I feel like I'm a helper which is actually therapeutic . . . ." Furthermore he gave high praise to the Clinic and expressed sentiments of endorsement and recommendation for this particular counselling service. He also described how a training institution was appealing because he felt like he was receiving the cutting edge of therapy. He stated, "I feel also like I'm getting the newest and best of what's current . . . and I feel good about that."

Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling

Along with essential qualities of the counsellor and the therapeutic relationship, PJ also identified some essential elements in the counselling process. He attempted to define counselling as non-pharmaceutical therapy; however, he also compared it to "somewhat like mothering." He saw counselling as a "contained situation" where the counsellor has a lot of control; however, PJ indicated that the mystery which ensues from the counsellor's control does not need to be solved in order for counselling to be successful. Furthermore, PJ discussed how he felt safe and supported throughout the process, even while vulnerable. He commented,

> there was no . . . portent of threatening situations. So I did not believe that it was even going to go there . . . which is pretty fundamental if you're trying to get straightened out.

He also mentioned that "just talking" was helpful and the opportunity for humor was welcomed. Additionally, PJ stated that one of the foremost ingredients he perceived as essential were the communication skills between the counsellor and the client.

Throughout Perceptions of Defining Elements of Counselling, PJ also discussed the impact of new techniques that led to self-discovery. He described instances where he was previously opposed to a counselling strategy and he tried it again and found that it was successful. He also talked about how personalizing his depression through Narrative Therapy was very helpful and he indicated that he would continue to use this technique regularly. He also indicated that unconventional counselling, like taking a walk instead of sitting in a room, was not only effective, but it also extended his perception of counselling beyond four walls and two chairs. He recounted this particular experience as,

> (It was the) farthest thing from my mind. Hadn't even thought of it remotely. Ding. Yeah, why not? . . . very different from anything I thought and probably

> pretty productive, cuz the next day I went for a big long walk . . . but most times I'm too depressed or tired to actually put my coat on and walk . . . .

Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling

Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling is essential to PJ's experience because he described how counselling provided him with positive change in his life. He indicated that his confidence, his self-competence and his feelings of self-worth increased as a direct result of counselling. He also acknowledged the progress made in his daily life which included getting out of bed earlier in the morning and feeling like the depression was lifting. Furthermore, he described how he was becoming more accountable to himself and striving to take responsibility and control over his illness. He described this experience by stating,

> . . . throughout the counselling thing . . . I feel way more valuable as a person, I have a lot more recognition of self worth. I'm not worth any more than I was, I just feel like it.

In this theme, PJ also discussed his new found support for counselling. He stated, "I may have started the first steps of this thing involuntarily but then it quickly became my project and. . . . I bought into the whole thing pretty quickly." He also described how his hesitant attitudes towards counselling disappeared and how he believed strongly in the utility of counselling. He discussed how counselling can change your life and how he would feel obligated to recommend therapy to someone in need. He stated that he would also seek counselling for himself in the future should his stress increase, although he would likely seek the advice of his doctor before attending again. Overall he stated, "It's the most useful thing that I've been involved in."

Overall Synthesis of PJ's Experience

PJ felt frustrated by his depression. He was aware of how others thought he appeared "normal," and he was angered by the control in which it had over his life. It was finally through his doctor's validation that he allowed himself to accept that his illness was real.

PJ's previous experiences of therapy left him with the perception that it was neither cost effective or helpful overall. However, PJ thoroughly trusted his doctor and his advice, and so when the physician referred him to personal counselling again, PJ felt confident that his best interests were in mind. However, because of his past experiences, he was still concerned that he would be facing more unhelpful therapy, and he realized that he wouldn't have attended without his doctor's encouragement. Furthermore, some part of him felt obligated to attend because counselling was a necessary component of his long-term disability program.

PJ entered counselling this time with the understanding that he needed some sort of outside help, but he knew very little about the process of counselling, which created a significant amount of anxiety. He didn't know what to expect and he thought counselling was going to be both costly in terms of time and financial resources. He was also apprehensive about the counselling process because he felt that is was going to be very difficult to express his emotions. However, during the initial stages of counselling, his anxiety was quickly reduced after he learned more about the process.

PJ also experienced a great deal of relief after he found out that his counsellor was a female. Because of her gender, he felt that it was easier to disclose personal information, which allowed him to become more emotionally involved in the process. He saw the female counsellor as less threatening and believed that her gender significantly influenced the therapeutic relationship. In hindsight, PJ believed that he couldn't have had as helpful of a relationship with a male counsellor.

PJ was intuitively aware that he would be able to engage in productive work with his counsellor. He perceived a mutual connection, which encouraged him to risk and try new things. He also perceived that a fundamental quality to the success of their relationship was that they both provided each other with a sense of learning.

PJ observed that some of the most essential characteristics of his counsellor included her genuineness and her modest, non-threatening approach. He perceived a lack of superiority in his counsellor, which allowed him to release his inhibitions and placed him at ease with the process. Furthermore, he believed that that counsellor was skilled in that she facilitated open communication and provided him with a new perspective regarding his difficulties.

In terms of the setting, PJ was content that he was attending a training institution. He felt satisfied that his counsellor was a student, because he was receiving the most current knowledge. Also he recognized another attractive quality to the setting was the opportunity to help someone learn. He felt that by both giving and receiving help, it was a therapeutic process for him.

As a consequence of the therapeutic tools and techniques, PJ experienced a sense of discovery and personal growth. PJ embraced new techniques that he was previously opposed to trying, such as role-playing, and the results were gratifying. Their impact resonated deeply and they radiated positive benefits. Through this discovery, it also enabled him to connect more closely with his feelings and to understand his own process.

PJ perceived a number of essential elements to the process of counselling. Although he strove to define counselling as somewhat like mothering, he emphasized the feeling of safety and support that he received while feeling vulnerable. Also he credited the open communication and the comic relief that humor provided as integral to his experience. Although he saw the counsellor as in charge of the process, he took comfort in the feeling that just talking was helpful. Overall, PJ felt that there was likely more to the counselling process than he could see; however, the mystery did not detract from its usefulness.

Through counselling, PJ acknowledged that change is occurring. By integrating counselling into his daily life, he witnessed an improvement in self-worth and self-competence. He attributed his growth in confidence, in part, to knowing that the counsellor cared. However, he also became more accountable to himself, which has also allowed for his life to take a new direction.

Overall, PJ's initial hesitations about counselling have disappeared through this experience. No longer is he an unwilling client, as he has taken the reins and become active in the process. Now he believes that counselling is an effective medium in which to help others, and he would purport the benefits, in part through a personal sense of obligation, to anyone in need. He would also consider attending counselling in the future; although, he would likely seek his doctor's advice on the matter first. In sum, he believes that counselling can change your life.

Analysis of Bill's Experience

From the data analysis, 10 themes were found by clustering Bill's individual thematic abstractions. These themes were (1) Lack of Social Support Drives Expectations for

Counselling, (2) Popular Images Influence the "Unknown", (3) Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling, (4) Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling, (5) Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities, (6) Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling, (7) Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling, (8) Experiences Increased Comfort with Counselling Process, (9) Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling, and (10) Acknowledges Counselling is Limited – Future Work Depends on Self. The analysis of Bill's experience is presented in Appendix E. The excerpts taken from the transcribed interview are presented in the first column and appear in the order that occurred in the interview. In the second column the paraphrasing is presented for each of the excerpts. In the third column the themes are presented to reflect the essential quality of the original excerpt. Following the presentation of excerpts, paraphrasing, and themes, the themes were then clustered into more abstract representations. The numbers that appear in brackets reflects the specific excerpt from which the theme was created. Below, each of Bill's themes will be discussed in relation to his own experience.

Lack of Social Support Drives Expectations for Counselling

Lack of Social Support Drives Expectations for Counselling is important to Bill's experience of counselling because the perceived lack of support in his life influenced his expectations for counselling. Of his personal life he stated,

> . . . the people that I know are acquaintances for the most part and they couldn't care less one way or the other. So I mean, if I started talking about this stuff they'd just shut it out, tune out or walk away . . . .

Consequently, Bill noted that by attending counselling he would be guaranteed that someone would listen to his difficulties, which suggested that he had the expectation of being heard. Additionally, Bill stated that, in part because of his lack of support in his life, he felt that he hadn't progressed since his 20's and he hoped that counselling would facilitate movement in his life. He described a desire to move forward and, ". . . get out of the rut that I was in . . . ." Furthermore, when he did receive personal support from an employment counsellor, who he thought was respectful and honest, he accepted the counselling referral, albeit hesitantly.

Popular Images Influence the "Unknown"

Bill discussed that initially he knew very little about counselling. In one sense, he was hoping for a "magic bullet" to fix his problems; although he recognized the implausibility of this happening. He described that the majority of his impressions were shaped by media images of the counselling seen on television and that there was some mystery that occurred behind the process. As a result, he indicated some concern regarding whether he could be helped,

> . . . sometimes in TV, people will have epiphanies and all of a sudden things are all clear and . . . other times it's 22 years and people are still in . . . counselling . . . are you going to be the one that's in 22 years or are you going to be the one who has the epiphany or what?

Additionally, Bill discussed the social stigmatization of clients who attend counselling. He described how he has watched others he knew ridiculed people in the past, and as a result, he kept his attendance unknown to others.

Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling

Bill described his initial wariness towards therapy. When his employment counsellor suggested counselling, Bill described himself as being surprised that, "someone voiced it and then suggested that I do counselling . . .cuz I never really thought about it before that." In the beginning Bill discussed how he was pessimistic and tense, and he had obvious apprehension about the process. Moreover, he described his apprehension as consequence of, ". . . not knowing the process and the end result about the process."

Furthermore, Bill related that he had difficulty disclosing personal information, although he did indicate that the process was made easier by talking to strangers. He also described how he had difficulties being sincere to both himself and to others, and he stated, ". . . it's hard for me to be honest about myself and let people know who I am and to let all that information come out. So I mean, it was difficult . . . ." Consequently, Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling encapsulates Bill's internal struggles that he brought to the counselling process.

Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling

Because Bill believed that men and women are emotionally different, he felt that gender significantly influenced his experience in therapy. He described how he felt that counselling was "easier" because his counsellor was female because, in part, he felt that he needed a women's perspective more so than a man's perspective. He also described how he believed a male counsellor would not have been able to help him with his emotional needs. He stated, ". . . women sorta think more emotionally and . . . having someone try to facilitate that . . . I don't think a guy would be able to do that." Consequently, Bill perceived that his counsellor's gender positively influenced his counselling process.

Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities

Bill described some qualities of the counsellor that he felt were important. First he indicated that the counsellor's role was to be non-judgmental, which was crucial to the counselling process. In his experience this attribute was apparent, and as well he described that the counsellor was a good listener and that she was receptive and attentive. Second, he discussed that another essential quality was she provided new perspectives that were very helpful. He stated,

> . . . she helps me try to, in situations with other people, try to think of different ways of talking to people, you know, interacting with people that I would've never thought of doing before, so I mean that helps quite a bit.

Also, Bill discussed another important attribute of the counsellor was her ability to encourage Bill to engage in self-reflection. He stated that he never would have thought of doing that before counselling, but has found that she nurtured a valuable process.

Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling

Within Bill's experience of counselling, he recalled some particular defining qualities. First, Bill described how simply talking was helpful and how being heard is "phenomenal" for him. Second, he described how he forced himself to be honest, which resulted in significant personal reflection. Third, Bill discussed how there was a sense of release from exposing his difficulties and sharing them with stranger seemed easier to accomplish. Fourth, Bill described how the counsellor facilitated the problem solving, and the advantage was she didn't give him the answers. Instead she provided him with alternative perspectives, which encouraged him to think of his own solutions. For Bill, this was one of the most important elements that defined his experience, as he stated,

> . . . as we were talking it was uh, ME that came up with the way dealing with the situation that, that would actually work . . . so I mean, that was good.

Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling

Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling emerged from Bill's experience of qualities that he perceived to hinder the counselling process. Although they were few, he related that he found the 50-minute time limit as restrictive. He indicated that often, it took him some time to engage in the counselling session, and then time expired when he was starting to feel comfortable. He stated,

> . . . the one problem is the time thing cuz . . . sometimes it takes a while to warm up and then you start getting on a role and you want to see how it goes and then whoops, sorry time up. . . . I think sometimes, you know the 50 minutes or the hour can be somewhat detrimental . . . .

To help with this problem, Bill suggested that extra time could be made available to carry the process should it be needed; however he indicated that he was aware of scheduling necessities. Bill described that other hindering aspect he experienced was the difficulty in weekly transitions. He discussed the problem of recapturing the moment from the previous session and he stated, ". . . trying to wait for a week to come back and you never really get back on the same footing . . . ."

Experiences Increased Comfort with Counselling Process

Since attending counselling, Bill described that he became less evasive, he stated, "I'm a lot more willing to impart information and I'm a lot more willing to think about things that I didn't want to think about when I first started." Furthermore, he discussed how his newfound openness has increased his willingness to seek counselling again, should it be needed. As another consequence to his increased comfort, Bill described how he would be more willing to recommend counselling to others than when he first started, he stated that,

> I'm a lot more receptive to it now than I was when I first started. So, I certainly would make it a lot more, a lot easier to let someone know that stuff's out there.

Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling

In Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling, Bill discussed how his new realizations through the counselling process led to a sense of personal growth. He recognized that progress requires personal openness, as well as openness to others' differences, and this has allowed him to better understand his relationships with others. He also realized that proactive thinking can be a significant asset. Moreover, one of the most significant realizations Bill made about the counselling process is that counselling involves a notable amount of self-direction. He stated, ". . . cuz more than anything I'm finding out that counselling is not necessarily somebody helping you, it's you realizing and helping yourself."

As a consequence of attending counselling Bill experienced internal change. He was appreciative of the increased reflection that was born out of his experience as well as the opportunity to learn new ways of evaluating his actions and reactions. Bill discussed how counselling enabled him to be more flexible in his thinking, as he stated,

> I'm still making some of the same mistakes but at least now even if it's afterwards I'm thinking . . . "Ah, okay, what could I've done, what should I've done" which is a huge, huge difference from the way I was thinking before . . . .

Additionally, counselling has provided him with a new connection to his feelings and has increased his sense of self-awareness. Also, Bill realized that his confidence has increased because he is able to respond to his own difficulties by taking to time to reflect and analyze the situation. He described this latter experience as "more beneficial than anything so far."

Acknowledges Counselling is Limited – Future Work Depends on Self

Bill described how he is responsible for the future progress that he will make. He acknowledged that counselling has given him the impetus, which started him on his way to change, however, he also realized that counselling is finite. Furthermore, he described his awareness that more positive change is needed, however, he didn't want to rely on counselling as a "crutch". In summary, he stated,

> . . . a lot of the answers are inside they just need to come out and right now the counselling is helping some of it come out and when that's over hopefully I'll have some of the skills to be able to bring the rest out.

Overall Synthesis of Bill's Experience

Bill entered counselling with the hope that it would facilitate some movement in his life as well as the fear that counselling may not be able to help him with his problems. He was frustrated at his lack of growth both personally and professionally, and his life seemed stagnant. He also felt a lack of personal support in his life, and he saw counselling as a guarantee that somebody would be there to listen to him. So when a trustworthy source referred him to counselling, he accepted, albeit with some reservations.

Despite Bill's desire to create change in his life, he was very apprehensive about the counselling process, and questioned its validity. He hadn't considered attending counselling before and during the initial sessions, he doubted that he had made the right decision to attend. Also, he felt extremely uncomfortable with personal disclosure and had difficulties being honest with both himself and others regarding his difficulties. In the beginning he was physically and emotional constricted as a result of his apprehension.

At first, Bill was hoping for a quick fix to make his problems disappear, although, he recognized the implausibility of this happening. He really didn't know what to expect, although he had media images of counselling to use as a point of reference. Additionally, he was concerned about the time commitment needed, and wondered how involved the whole process was going to be. Furthermore, Bill had a clear sense of society's stigmatization of counselling, as he had witnessed others mock those seeking help. As such, he kept his attendance concealed.

Bill felt that the counselling process was made easier because the counsellor was female. He perceived that women are more emotionally open than men, and he was of the opinion that he needed a woman's perspective to help him with his process. In hindsight, he concluded that a male counsellor would not have been as able to fulfill his emotional needs as a female counsellor would.

Bill perceived a number of positive qualities that were essential to the counselling process. Primarily he saw the counsellor's role as being non-judgmental; however, he also praised the counsellor's attentiveness and approachability. He found utility in her refreshing perspectives and experienced notable amount self-reflection from her approach. Bill was pleased that he was able to find solutions to his problems through discussions with the counsellor. He felt that an important component to the counselling process was feeling compelled to be honest with himself, and as a consequence he experienced a sense of relief once he exposed his difficulties. Bill also felt that just talking was helpful and actually feeling like he was being heard was a phenomenal experience for him.

Despite becoming more comfortable with therapy, Bill experienced some hindering aspects of counselling. He didn't like that there was a stringent time limit on each session because he saw it as restricting. He also found transitions between the weekly sessions were difficult because recapturing the process from the previous session was rarely instantaneous. However, through his experience he became less evasive and more open to the process. Consequently, because of his overall positive experience he would be more receptive to seeking counselling in the future, and he would also be more likely to recommend counselling to someone in need.

As a consequence of counselling, Bill feels more connected to his feelings. His awareness of his own processes has been heightened and he continues to experience more flexibility in his thinking. He is appreciative of the learning opportunities counselling has provided, including the consequences of narrow-mindedness and the benefits of pro-active thinking. Counselling also gave him a new understanding about interpersonal relationships, which has increased his tolerance to differences. However, one of the most important lessons that Bill learned through his experience is that counselling involves a significant amount of client engagement and self-help. Consequently this has given him increased confidence in his ability to direct his own process of change.

In the future, Bill desires to be independent of counselling. He realizes that its benefits are limited and that he is fully responsible for future progress in his life. He acknowledged that counselling has initiated the process of positive change; however, he is also aware that after counselling has ended, he needs to continue his efforts in order to create more changes in his life. Since counselling, Bill has been more committed to self-growth and understanding.

Analysis of Joe's Experience

From the data analysis, 12 themes were found by clustering Joe's individual thematic abstractions. These themes were (1) Expresses Desire for Personal Resolution, (2) Attribution of Motivators to Counselling, (3) Onset of Counselling Invokes Suspicion and Trepidation, (4) Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling, (5) Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling, (6) Experience of Exposure Creates Memorable Moments, (7) Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities, (8) Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling, (9) Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling, (10) Experience of Increased Receptivity Resonates with Personal Gains, (11) Perception of Counsellor's Personal Stake, and (12) Expresses Willingness to Integrate Counselling. The analysis of Joe's experience is presented in Appendix F. The excerpts taken from the transcribed interview are presented in the first column and appear in the order that occurred in the interview. In the second column the paraphrasing is presented for each of the excerpts. In the third column the themes are presented to reflect the essential quality of the original excerpt. Following the presentation of excerpts, paraphrasing, and themes, the themes were then clustered into more abstract representations. The numbers that appear in brackets reflects the specific excerpt from which the theme was created. Below, each of Joe's themes will be discussed in relation to his own experience.

Expresses Desire for Personal Resolution

In Expresses Desire for Personal Resolution, Joe discusses his hopes for counselling. He recognizes that the hurts he had experienced in the past profoundly affected his life. Also he acknowledged that his personal difficulties had existed for some time before agreeing to seek counselling. Through counselling he was hoping to gain some clarity about his difficulties and become more relaxed with himself. He stated, "I was just hoping to free my mind a little bit and, maybe just be more relaxed with myself." He also desired a "sympathetic ear" to help him through his process.

Attribution of Motivators to Counselling

Joe describes his wife's support as integral to his participation in counselling. He conceded that he never would have thought counselling was possible for him without her help. He indicated that her perception of counselling was also encouraging, in that you didn't have to be "crazy" to attend. He stated,

> . . . she is of the opinion, you know, like your mind is just like any other organ you've got. You know . . . if there's something wrong you should do something about it. It doesn't mean you're crazy. . . . the way she had put it made it a lot easier for me to make the decision to go . . .

Also, Joe described how he didn't feel pressured by his wife to expose the content of his sessions once in counselling, which also made him feel supported. Furthermore, Joe indicated that financial considerations also influenced his decision to attend counselling.

Although he didn't go as far as shopping around for other psychological services, he did indicate that the services at the Clinic were attractive because of the low cost to attend.

Onset of Counselling Invokes Suspicion and Trepidation

Onset of Counselling Invokes Suspicion and Trepidation is important to Joe's experience as he describes how he felt an increasing sense of trepidation as the first counselling appointment approached. As the date drew nearer, he started to question whether he wanted somebody else to know about the difficulties in his private life, and this led him to be more guarded towards the counselling process. On the first day of counselling, Joe wanted to cancel his appointment, as he became increasingly unsure as to why he was attending. He stated,

> . . . it was sorta like one of the things where I say, "Okay, yeah I'll do it, right." And then when it comes down to the actual day where you're going, then it's like, "Aw shit, I don't wanna do this" you know, like, "Why am I going through with it?"

In this theme, Joe also describes how difficult it was to attend counselling while not knowing what to expect. Popular images of counselling largely influenced his initial perceptions, as he envisioned lying on a "big couch" and "spilling my guts." He also prepared himself for a lot more confrontation than what actually happened and thought that he would be facing theoretical attacks by the counsellor. Because of the ambiguity, Joe describes how anxious and apprehensive he became and as a result he questioned the validity of counselling and its ability to help him with his problems.

Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling

Initially, Joe admitted that he was guarded. He found it particularly difficult to disclose personal information and he described himself as "defensive." He acknowledged that he created a psychological barrier between himself and his counsellor, in that he "put up the walls" and found it very difficult to bring down his defense mechanisms in order to effectively communicate. Similarly, he often mentioned how he had the desire to appear as a "good guy" and "not crazy." He stated, "I didn't want anybody to think that I was weak, or mentally impaired . . . ." He described how, at the first session, he tried to impress his counsellor with his normalcy as he wanted to appear attractive. Additionally, he commented the counsellor's questions could be too forward in the beginning, and this would cause him to retreat or "zoom out" to where he would be cast into a more positive light. He characterized this experience as being caught off guard, and at times he found it too painful to discuss. He described this as,

> . . . sometimes their questions are a little too pointed for you right at the start you know . . . sorta you know, like a dentist sticking his instrument on a nerve or something . . . . and you're just like, you're first reaction is to just sorta back away . . . just change the subject . . . .

Furthermore, in Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling, Joe described how he did not want to be pitied by the counsellor for his problems, and most of all, he did not want the counsellor controlling him. He spoke of the importance of "being his own man" and his strong desire to prohibit anyone from having power over him. In essence, this theme is important to Joe's experience as he consistently strove to exhibit a semblance of normalcy as well as consistently trying to stay in control.

Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling

Joe described counselling as "somewhat like mothering." He felt that it was particularly advantageous in his situation to have a woman counsellor as Joe described how he was more receptive to the counselling process due to his counsellor's gender. Furthermore, he took comfort in the nurturing qualities of his female counsellor and felt that it was easier to disclose personal information because of these qualities. In hindsight, Joe described how he didn't believe that counselling would have been as effective with a male counsellor, although he never experienced therapy with a male counsellor before. Despite this, he discussed how he would have been more likely to put on a "macho" front with a male counsellor and would have been less likely to open up and talk honestly to another man about his difficulties.

Experience of Exposure Creates Memorable Moments

In Experience of Exposure Creates Memorable Moments, Joe described the effect of his disclosure and how it was translated into memorable in-session experiences. First, Joe summed his thoughts about counselling as involving increased self – understanding and going inside himself to find explanations that he was looking for in his life. He described how, through sharing, he experienced some "major breakthroughs," some of which involved latent memories resurfacing and making connections to his present life. He also experienced some "powerful" moments in counselling where he let go emotionally and allowed himself to cry, and in turn his counsellor cried with him. During these emotional experiences, Joe described how he felt out of control emotionally and he wasn't able to collect himself but instead flowed with the experience. He stated, "I felt like I was out of control. Like I didn't have control anymore and . . . it was like I didn't have control of myself emotionally . . . ."

Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities

In Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities, Joe discussed some of the counsellor's authentic qualities that were encouraging and gave him a sense of ease about the counselling process. Joe described how he felt that the counsellor was genuinely engaged in the therapy process. He perceived her as dedicated to helping him, as she seemed interested in what he had to say instead of just going through the motions. He stated,

> . . . she just seemed to be genuinely interested in what I had to say as opposed to . . . just recording everything (pointed to video camera in room) and asking all the obvious questions . . . .

Additionally, Joe felt that she had an interest in him as a person and not just another client. This sense of concern that he felt was comforting and placed him at ease with his counsellor. Furthermore, he found himself discussing issues that he would have not likely discussed with other people, and he attributed this experience to the genuine sympathy that she showed to his problems. This, in turn, gave him further encouragement to share his difficulties. Joe also described how that counsellor was sensitive to his needs, and used a gentle approach, realizing that was what he needed. He described that at times, he would start to shy away from an issue and she would sensitively follow his lead and then bring him back to the issue in a roundabout way. During these times particularly, he felt that the counsellor was genuine and adjusted her style to match his needs.

Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling

In Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling, Joe discussed the aspects of counselling that didn't lend to his positive experience. Initially, he was wary of the age discrepancy between the therapist and himself. He questioned whether she was, ". . . a little too young to understand some of the problems." This may also indicate that Joe had some preconceptions about the ability to understand being related to age and life experience; however, this may be extending the meaning beyond the context of what he intended. Joe also discussed his experience of live supervision, which he found quite disruptive to the in-session process. He felt that during the live supervision the disruption mostly centered around the phone calls from the supervisor, which "chopped up" the session, and a complete flow was never established. However, the most hindering aspect about counselling for Joe was the way in which it disrupted his daily schedule. He experienced a significant amount of scheduling frustration, particularly while trying to plan around his shifting work schedule. Furthermore, he described how the weekly routine of coming to counselling was also bothersome. He stated, "I still hate going every week . . . the physical getting here, the parking, and, and just the way it disrupts your life . . . ." As a result, Joe indicated that he was anticipating the end of counselling and looking forward to when his schedule could get back to normal.

Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling

In Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling, Joe highlighted some of the fundamentals within his experience of counselling. First, through information provided in the initial sessions, his anxiety about the counselling process diminished and he no longer saw it as a "big deal." He realized that he wasn't bound to some nebulous commitment and he was in control about whether to opt out of the sessions or not, which provided him with some significant relief. Second, Joe identified trust as essential to the counselling relationship. Previously it was discussed in another theme that Joe had a particular difficulty lowering his defenses in order to communicate effectively. As such, he saw trust as a critical feature to the relationship, which was essential to his experience. Third, Joe discussed his realization that finding meaning within his life was dependent on his ability to reflect on his past. He described before how he preferred to "zoom out" when issues became too painful, yet he recognized the value in sitting down with your past and sorting it through. In essence, Joe recognized that progress required him to engage in self-reflection. Fourth, and last, Joe described how he came to see counselling as a refuge. He stated, "it's nice to air some um, concerns once in a while where you don't feel like anyone is judging you, [and] sometimes things you don't want to talk to your wife about . . . ."

Experience of Increased Receptivity Resonates with Personal Gains

In Experience of Increased Receptivity Resonates with Personal Gains, Joe discussed the changes that have occurred in his life as a result of counselling. He talked about how he became more open to the process as time went on, and he described himself as being more relaxed and more willing to consider the counsellor's suggestions. He acknowledged that counselling has facilitated personal awareness and has given him the ability to find meaning from some problems in his past. Additionally, Joe described some internal changes that he has recognized since attending counselling. He discussed how he is more willing to disclose personal difficulties since counselling, as he stated, "I'm a lot more open to be able to talk about certain things that I . . . probably wouldn't have been able to like six or seven months ago before this all started." He also acknowledged that counselling has helped change his self-image in that he is less critical about himself and he is more able to trust others since being in counselling.

Perception of Counsellor's Personal Stake

As a result of attending a training institution, Joe described his perceptions of the counsellor's process. He perceived that the counsellor also had a personal stake in the sessions, because of her status as a student. Consequently, he felt that she was trying to make an impression on him through her desire to be an effective helper and to demonstrate her learning to him. Additionally, Joe held the belief that she was trying a lot harder than an experienced counsellor because she was a student. As such, Joe sensed that they were both benefiting from the sessions as he was receiving help, and she was learning to give help. Overall, Perception of Counsellor's Personal Stake is important to Joe's experience, as the counsellor's student status shaped his perception concerning the amount and quality of effort to help that he was receiving at the Clinic.

Expresses Willingness to Integrate Counselling

In Expresses Willingness to Integrate Counselling, Joe described his support for counselling. Overall, he perceived that his experience was positive and stated that he would recommend counselling to others. He tried to ensure that the counselling sessions were not just "dead time" but instead he strove to apply the results to his daily life. Furthermore, he recognized the utility in seeking counselling in the future and acknowledged that it may become a way of life for him, and likened it to a form of self-maintenance. He stated, ". . . every couple of years it just might be a good idea to . . . go in for six months and just sorta you know, let things loose . . . just like maintenance for a car. . . ." Consequently, through Joe's experience, he developed an affinity to counselling and he recognized the value that can be gained from the counselling process.

Overall Synthesis of Joe's Experience

Joe was aware of his personal difficulties for some time before he sought out professional help. However, he acknowledged that he would not have attended counselling without the prompting of his wife. Through counselling he was hoping to resolve some issues that he was carrying for over 20 years and to gain some personal understanding. In essence, Joe was searching to become more comfortable and relaxed with himself.

Joe attributed his wife's openness to counselling as integral to his attendance. He received support and validation that normalized his perception that people who attended therapy were not "crazy." Furthermore, the services at the Clinic were financially attractive, which also provided encouragement to attend.

However, as the initial appointment date drew near, Joe experienced increased apprehension and he became more protective of his privacy. He was ready to revoke his commitment on the day of the appointment, as he didn't know what to expect. His perception of counselling had been shaped by popular images of counselling, including lying on a big couch and "telling all," and so he had prepared himself for confrontations and theoretical attacks. Also, he questioned the usefulness of therapy, which added to his apprehension.

Joe also experienced a significant amount of personal barriers in counselling. He realized that he had a psychological wall that made communication difficult and, although his desire was to lower this barrier, he found it extremely challenging. Initially he was guarded against the whole counselling process, notably when the questioning became too pointed. In these times, Joe would divert the conversation to a safer topic. Overall, Joe found personal disclosure very difficult. Furthermore, throughout the counselling experience, Joe had a desire to control the image that he was projecting to the counsellor. He didn't want to be pitied, nor did he want to appear "crazy." Rather, he had a desire to be seen as attractive, which in some instances meant trying to avoid issues that cast him in an unfavorable light.

Joe perceived counselling as somewhat like mothering, and he was grateful that his counsellor was a female. He found that self-disclosure was easier because of her gender and the qualities associated with female nurturers. In hindsight, Joe believed that a male counsellor would not have been as effective because he would have been concerned with projecting a stereotypical male image of toughness and strength to another man.

Overall Joe found that counselling involved a lot of increased personal understanding, as he had hoped. Through counselling he uncovered some poignant memories and experienced significant emotionality in session, which was also shared by the counsellor. He perceived counselling as a refuge and recognized that progress required self-reflection. He attributed education about the counselling process as a significant factor in reducing his initial apprehension. He identified trust as paramount in the therapeutic relationship. Concerning the counsellor, Joe was encouraged by her authenticity. He felt that she was sensitive to his needs and in turn, her support encouraged his disclosure. Additionally, his perception of the counsellor's dedication to helping made him more at ease with the process. However, Joe also perceived that his counsellor had a desire to be effective because of her inexperience and status as a student.

He was aware of the mutual benefit from his attendance and felt she was trying harder than a counsellor with years and years of experience.

Despite Joe's increasing ease with the counselling process, he experienced some hindering aspects. Primarily he felt that counselling was disruptive to his daily life because of the scheduling frustrations it presented. As a result, at the time of the interview, Joe was anticipating the termination of counselling. Additionally, Joe initially questioned whether the age discrepancy would limit the counsellor's ability to help, as he wondered whether she was too young to understand some of his problems. Also, Joe felt that the experience of live supervision was intrusive because it fragmented the session and a regular rhythm couldn't be established.

Through this counselling experience, Joe is more open to disclose personal issues and explore new ideas. Throughout his experience, he strove to integrate the sessions and apply them in daily life and, consequently, he became receptive to incorporating counselling into his future as a form of self-maintenance. He believes that counselling has facilitated personal awareness and change. Also he believes that since counselling, he is more willing to trust others and he is thinking more positively about himself.

Analysis of Spencer's Experience

From the data analysis, 10 themes were found by clustering the individual thematic abstractions. These themes were (1) Attribution of Motivators to Counselling, (2) Identifies Expectations of Counselling, (3) Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities, (4) Expresses Importance of Gender/Personal Background of Counsellor, (5) Expression of Satisfaction in Tools and Techniques, (6) Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling, (7) Realization of Counselling's Worth Generates Openness, (8) Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling, (9) Termination of Counselling Invokes Apprehension, and (10) Expresses Positive Sentiments for Training Institution. The analysis of Spencer's experience is presented in Appendix G. The excerpts taken from the transcribed interview are presented in the first column and appear in the order that occurred in the interview. In the second column the paraphrasing is presented for each of the excerpts. In the third column the themes are presented to reflect the essential quality of the original excerpt. Following the presentation of excerpts, paraphrasing, and themes, the themes were then clustered into more abstract representations. The numbers that appear in brackets reflects the specific excerpt from which the theme was created. Below, each of Spencer's themes will be discussed in relation to his own experience.

Attribution of Motivators to Counselling

Spencer acknowledged that outside help was needed, although he believed that the whole family should have been involved in the process because the difficulties extended across the entire system. He discussed how the cohesion of the family unit was threatened as he and his wife had considered separation.

Through prior discussions with his wife, Spencer described how he felt a significant amount of burden from his spouse to single-handedly change the relationship dynamics of his family. He talked about the resentment that he carried, along with his feelings of unfairness for this responsibility. He was aware that his wife was unable to attend these sessions, however, this awareness did little to assuage the burden that he felt. In this statement, he illustrated his perspective,

> You know, saying, "well gee you know if you change Spencer the rest of us will change and everything will be better." And the first thought was, well, why do I

> have to be the one that has to change, you know. What have I done or, what am I doing that's so drastically wrong. Why don't other people also change at the same time?

As such, it was his wife who played the strongest role in influencing Spencer to attend counselling, and he described her as the "motivational factor" early on in his participation.

Yet, additional to his wife's influence, Spencer's participation in counselling was also riding on his image of being the protector in the family. As a result of this further pressure and sense of obligation, he stepped into the counselling room carrying a significant amount of guilt and burden. He stated,

> My approach in terms of my character is such that I'm supposed to be the strong one in the family. . . . I'm the person who's you know, supposed to keep the stiff upper lip . . . keep the family together and moving them along. And that's . . . one of the, the factors in, in me willing to participate in counselling to begin with.

Consequently, Spencer's wife and the threat of possible separation could be described as the early motivating factors; however, Spencer also felt an obligation to protect the family and do whatever is necessary to maintain its cohesion.

Identifies Expectations of Counselling

Spencer described that his primary expectation of counselling was to improve the father-son relationship with his step-son. He had also hoped that by improving this relationship, the benefits would have a "positive spin-off" for his wife and other son. That is, he was hoping that the gains made in counselling would radiate across the family system. Spencer approached counselling realistically as he stated he wasn't coming for a "quick fix" for problems that had existed for some time; however, he desired to gain strategies to help with the long road ahead. Spencer recognized that change wouldn't come quickly. In terms of in-session expectations prior to starting, Spencer believed that counselling would involve "a lot of verbal communication" with the counsellor providing "insight and direction," but ultimately he and his son would be finding their own solutions. Spencer also believed that emotional exposure was necessary in order for counselling to be beneficial, as he stated,

> I had an expectation that . . . in terms of having good results that you have to get down to the underlying problems and issues and . . . having to expose [your] feelings and emotions . . . .

Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities

Spencer identified a number of essential counsellor qualities that he perceived were relevant to his experience. He described how the counsellor was receptive to the needs of him and his son. Spencer believed that there was a level of understanding and agreement in terms of the goals of counselling. Additionally he believed that the counsellor was flexible to "deal with situations that occurred at home, during the week." Spencer saw this as an essential quality because issues came to be addressed promptly as they happened at home. Moreover, Spencer sensed that the counsellor demonstrated genuine understanding and empathy to his situation. Spencer discussed how the counsellor provided him with validation, insights and acknowledgement, which he felt were beneficial qualities. Lastly, he perceived the counsellor to be competent and professional. He described how the counsellor's open style was encouraging, which made Spencer feel more relaxed and comfortable with the counselling process. He also perceived the counsellor was knowledgeable and skilled. He stated, "... [the] counsellor did a good job of setting up the framework for some productive communication between my son and I."

Expresses Importance of Gender/Personal Background of Counsellor

Spencer described the importance of the counsellor's personal qualities. Spencer firmly believed that the counsellor's gender and personal background were beneficial to understanding the parenting challenges that can arise out of being a father. He stated,

> . . . also the fact since we're trying to improve a father son relationship that, I think in this case the male had a better understanding because of that background of being a father and the issues.

Similarly, Spencer discussed that the counsellor was able to provide some valuable insights because he was a father himself. This may suggest that Spencer would not have perceived another male counsellor without children as insightful, although it is difficult to extrapolate from the given data. However, Spencer acknowledged that, overall, it was easier for him to admit his difficulties to another man, as he felt it was easier to identify with. In hindsight, he expressed concern that a female counsellor may have been biased or that he may have been sensitive to the issue, as he stated,

> . . . well for me, opening up more and admitting some sort of family problems . . . with a female. . . perhaps in the back of my mind thinking that she would automatically sort of side with my wife.

Therefore as a consequence of the counsellor's gender and background, Spencer came to believe that these qualities were essential components of his experience in counselling.

Expression of Satisfaction in Tools and Techniques

Throughout Expression of Satisfaction in Tools and Techniques, Spencer discussed the value of the new techniques. He expressed gratification in the techniques that the counsellor used and believed they were effective. He stated, "... the counsellor did provide some excellent tools and techniques and insight into uh, the issues between Trevor and I." More specifically, Spencer expressed appreciation for the measuring tool that the counsellor employed, which quantified the level of progress on a continuum of percentages. Spencer particularly enjoyed this tool, as it quickly provided him with a reference point that could "articulate very quickly whether or not things were improving . . . or whether or not there was a setback." Moreover, Spencer identified this measuring tool as more useful than "just talk" to gauge the progress.

Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling

In Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling, Spencer described both internal and external factors that were impediments to the counselling process. Internally, he described how he was initially guarding his personal information from the counsellor. At the beginning he strove to keep his emotions under control and he was careful of what he was saying and how he was being perceived. Also, he discussed how it was extremely uncomfortable to personally reveal himself. When asked to describe what is was like discussing personal issues in counselling, Spencer replied,

> A degree of uh, embarrassment. Um, a little bit of anxiety. I mean you are exposing yourself to other individuals, your thoughts or feelings. So a sense of vulnerability and [in] some cases maybe even shame.

Another hindering aspect that Spencer described was the presence of the video cameras in the room. Although the counsellor openly agreed not to use the cameras in his sessions, Spencer described how the camera's potential ability to capture his personal difficulties forever was a "threatening feature." He discussed how he felt "a bit intimidated" by their presence and throughout his time at the Clinic he was conscious of their presence. One other hindering aspect that Spencer discussed was the fact that although he recognized the need for counselling, the weekly sessions were intruding. He stated, ". . . even though you recognize that we needed it and it was beneficial, at the same time it was still disruptive to our daily lives." As a consequence, Spencer described how he was glad to end his weekly commitment in order to reclaim his regular schedule.

Realization of Counselling's Worth Generates Openness

Spencer discussed the consequences of becoming more comfortable with the counselling process. He spoke of his diminished feelings of burden and guilt that he originally felt and the consequences of this release. He acknowledged that counselling was largely responsible for "lifting the weight off his shoulders" and as a result he described how he became less shameful about counselling. Spencer indicated that the in-session environment became "more open and natural" and noted that communication improved among himself, his son and the counsellor. Once he recognized the intrinsic value of counselling, Spencer found it easier to risk and open up. He surprised himself at the amount of personal disclosure he demonstrated as a consequence of feeling less burdened with responsibility. It could be likened to testing the temperature of the water and once it proved comfortable, he was able to "dive right in." He stated,

> . . . so once I found some intrinsic value . . . being more open and being more vulnerable was fine. . . . I wasn't as guarded, I wasn't as calculating in terms of my answers. I was a lot more open and freer with my thoughts and feelings.

Similarly he advised that as improvement became apparent, his motivation increased to try new ways of relating. He described how counselling allowed him and his son to experiment and he appreciated the utility of being able to return with the counsellor and debrief the results. As such, in Spencer's experience, his internal motivation to attend counselling was positively impacted by the perception of improvement.

Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling

Spencer acknowledged that the benefits of counselling have expanded his understanding of self and his relationships with others. Through counselling he advised that he achieved his goal to improve the father-son relationship and he expressed his gratefulness for these benefits. He described how counselling helped increase the communication and understanding between his son and him "tremendously." Spencer also discussed how he gained an understanding of family relationships through counselling and he acknowledged that counselling provided him with "some good insight" with respect to his own behaviors and expectations.

Spencer spoke of how he strove to integrate counselling into his daily life. He learned helpful skills and talked about his desire to apply them after counselling had finished. He recognized that the benefits of counselling have spread to other areas of his life, such as relationships both within and outside of the family structure. In actuality, Spencer was surprised at the extensive impact of counselling as he stated, ". . . it's had a broader based impact more so than I had originally thought." Further, he related that he had successfully applied the skills from counselling to his workplace environment. In Spencer's experience of counselling, other areas of his life also benefited beyond the original goal of improving the father-son relationship.

Spencer acknowledged that he would be less hesitant to seek counselling in the future, as his apprehension towards the process has significantly diminished. He stated, ". . . only because this has been a positive session and outcome that I wouldn't hesitate to enter it again." However, he indicated that his return to counselling would require a significant need in order to seek help again. Additionally, Spencer indicated that since counselling, he would be more willing to encourage others to look at therapy as an option and let them know that worthwhile support is available.

Termination of Counselling Invokes Apprehension

Spencer had terminated his session a week after he shared his experience for this study and at that time he expressed concern that deterioration may occur without the support of counselling. He admitted that he felt some apprehension surrounding the termination process despite his acknowledgement that the goals of therapy had been met. He stated,

> I guess there's a fear, well gee this support and counselling has been great you know, but once you leave the last session sort of thing you know, well gee I'm hoping that everything is in place and will continue but . . . you're changing and you're hoping that you're not going to have a significant set back where you sorta wonder well you know, get back into that rut.

Due to his apprehension, he expressed a desire for counselling to end less abruptly. He indicated some difficulty in going from weekly sessions to nothing, despite the disruption to the daily schedule, as he expressed a desire to end counselling more gradually. He indicated a preference for a "safety net" where perhaps it may have been better to schedule monthly follow-up sessions, before completely ending the counselling.

Expresses Positive Sentiments for Training Institution

In Expresses Positive Sentiments for Training Institution, Spencer spoke highly of some aspects of attending a training institution. He expressed appreciation for the training process that is part of the counsellor's development and understood that student counsellors need the live client contact in order to improve their own skills. Additionally he expressed that he was not worried if the counselling "went wrong" as he felt supported by the structure of the Clinic, whereby the counsellor could defer to his supervisor for guidance and support. Furthermore, Spencer explained that the process of helping and being helped as an attractive aspect to seeking counselling at the Clinic. That is, Spencer felt good about being able to reciprocate the counsellor's help by giving him some further experience. Overall, Spencer had an appreciation for the training process and he believed it was attractive to be a productive part of that process.

Overall Synthesis of Spencer's Experience

Spencer felt a significant amount of responsibility for changing the overall dynamics of the family's functioning. He felt resentment towards his wife for her inability to partake in the counselling sessions, despite his awareness that scheduling difficulties made it extremely unlikely that she could attend. He felt burdened that the family problems rested on his shoulders and he was required to make the changes.

Subsequently he placed a notable amount of pressure on himself to assume leadership within the counselling sessions, which resulted in feelings of guilt that the relationship difficulties were entirely his fault.

Spencer's wife influenced his attendance considerably, despite both of their awareness that outside help was needed. In part, his participation was also influenced by a desire to protect the family unit. In addition, however, the problems were so extensive that they threatened the family's cohesion, in that marital separation had been considered.

Spencer's perceived that in order to improve the father-son relationship, it would require active engagement in the counselling process. He held the assumption that progress would require a remarkable amount of emotional exposure. Furthermore, he hoped that the benefits would radiate across the family system and the lessons from counselling would provide him with a foundation for the long road ahead.

Initially, Spencer was guarded about sharing personal information and emotions. He found disclosure in counselling extremely uncomfortable and he experienced a mixture of embarrassment, anxiety, vulnerability, and shame during the initial process. He also experienced intimidation from the video camera that was mounted in the counselling rooms, despite his knowledge that the counsellor has agreed not to utilize it. Just knowing the camera could capture his difficulties forever, was enough to feel threatened by its presence. Furthermore, in spite of the awareness that counselling was needed, Spencer felt its disruption on his daily life. Consequently, he was glad when the weekly sessions ended.

Despite these aforementioned barriers to counselling, Spencer felt that once counselling proved itself valuable, it was easier to engage in the process. That is, his internal motivation increased as improvement from the sessions was recognizable. He felt more freedom to express himself and he became more comfortable with the process. He also recognized that communication among the counsellor, himself, and his son improved and the sessions became more open and natural.

Spencer recognized a number of qualities that were essential to the counsellor. First, he felt that the counsellor demonstrated genuine understanding and the counsellor was receptive to the needs of both him and his son. Second, he felt that the counsellor's empathy, insight and flexibility were helpful qualities. Third, he perceived the counsellor as competent and professional, which he believes extended the quality of the overall experience. Spencer also experienced a notable amount of trust in the counsellor's ability. Not only did the counsellor's skill and style encourage open, relaxed communication, but Spencer also felt personally validated through the counsellor's approach.

Spencer perceived that the counsellor's personal background and gender positively impacted his experience in counselling. He believed that the counsellor's personal experience as a father was valuable, even though the counsellor did not have a son. Additionally, Spencer felt that it was easier to relate to another father. In hindsight, Spencer was also concerned that a female counsellor would have been biased to automatically side with his wife's position in the family, and so was content to receive services from a male counsellor.

Spencer was satisfied in the tools and techniques he received in counselling. He felt the counsellor was successful in the methods that he used. He was also grateful for the measuring tool that the counsellor employed, as Spencer saw the quantifiable data was better and more useful than just talking when it came to measuring progress.

Spencer perceived that counselling had met his goals to improve his relationship with his son. Through this experience he gained an increased sense of personal awareness and understanding that didn't exist prior to counselling. He also felt that counselling provided him with a new perspective of the family roles and how they impacted the relationships among family members. Spencer acknowledged that counselling allowed him to safely experiment with new ways of relating, and he was quite surprised at his own ability to open up and engage in the process. Moreover, Spencer felt that counselling significantly reduced his initial feelings of guilt and burden, which in turn reduced his shame about attending counselling. In terms of attending a training institution, Spencer understood the need for counsellor development and actually perceived that helping further someone else's training was an attractive component to his own therapy.

Spencer was surprised at the impact of counselling and how it extended to other relationships, including those at work. He recognized the usefulness of the tools and techniques and how they can be applied to other areas in his life. He experienced some apprehension upon termination of counselling as he wondered whether deterioration would occur without the safety and support that counselling provided. However, due to his positive experience, Spencer would be open to seeking counselling again should circumstances become unmanageable. Also, he is now more willing to encourage others to seek counselling given his favorable experience.

Shared Experience

16 themes were found to be common to all of the participants, which are presented in Appendix H. These themes are (1) Experiences Significant Environmental Strain, (2) Indicates Security in External Source as Integral, (3) Identifies Initial Outcome

Expectations, (4) Conveys Preconceptions of Counselling, (5) Experiences Difficulty in Initial Disclosure, (6) Experiences Relief From Counselling, (7) Experiences Increased Comfort with Counselling Process, (8) Describes a Safe and Supportive Environment as Essential, (9) Identifies Counsellor's Gender as Significant to Counselling Process, (10) Perceives Essential Qualities of Counsellor, (11) Acknowledges Change Through Counselling, (12) Recognizes Internal Change in Self, (13) Gains Understanding of Self, (14) Experiences Motivation to Integrate Counselling, (15) Expresses Willingness to Consider Future Counselling, and (16) Experiences Increased Willingness to Advocate for Counselling. It should be noted that not all first ordered themes from each of the participants' experiences could be clustered into the shared themes, as they were bound within the experience of the individual.

Higher Ordered Themes

The 16 themes that were common to all of the participants were further clustered into more abstract themes, which are presented in Appendix I. These higher ordered themes included (1) Pressures and Barriers that Influenced Initial Process of Counselling, (2) Experiences Emotional Relaxation In Counselling, (3) Perception of Influential Qualities In Counselling, (4) Counselling Has Encouraged Change and Growth, and (5) Experiences Increased Receptivity Towards Counselling. Below, each of the 16 shared themes are discussed. The higher ordered themes that are outlined in Appendix I will serve as the framework for presenting these results of the shared experience.

Pressures and Barriers that Influenced Initial Process of Counselling

Pressures and Barriers that Influenced Initial Process of Counselling was created on the basis of the participants' early experiences in the counselling process. It reveals the environmental factors that were largely responsible for their attendance and it speaks to the expectations and preconceptions that all the participants carried as they walked through the threshold of the counsellor's door. Furthermore, this theme shows the initial difficulties that each of the participants experienced in disclosing personal information and sharing emotions in counselling. Below, each of the shared themes are discussed.

Experiences Significant Environmental Strain. This theme involved the environmental factors that were partially responsible for the men's attendance in counselling. Each of the participants experienced a significant amount of strain prior to counselling. Both Spencer and PJ alluded to emotional strains that were occurring in their life. For Spencer, it was the strain of burden and responsibility to deal with the family difficulties. There was a sense of urgency for change in Spencer's experience, as there was the threat of family separation should the circumstances have remained the same. For PJ the strain was the weight of depression that had seriously impacted his personal and professional career. He described his difficulties in waking and rising, and his struggles with motivation. Additionally for PJ, counselling became a requirement of his long-term disability program, when he realized that he could no longer return to work. In Bill's experience, loneliness and a lack of understanding in his personal life contributed to his experience of environmental strain. Bill described how he did not have anyone to share his difficulties with, and felt that he did not have any close, personal relationships to talk with about his difficulties. Joe's experience was not as similar to the experiences of Spencer, PJ or Bill in that he did not explicitly describe a sense of emotional strain. However, in Joe's experience, he talked about the financial limitations of seeking psychological help, and how the Clinic's reduced fee was attractive. Although he did not explore other avenues of help, he consented that his attendance at the Clinic was in part, financially motivated, as the Clinic, "fit the bill."

Indicates Security in External Source as Integral. This theme evolved through the participants' descriptions of their trust and respect that they received from the person responsible for encouraging them to attend counselling. All of the men spoke to their confidence in their external source, which appeared influential in their participation. Spencer, Joe and PJ had established relationships with the person who encouraged them to attend. For Spencer and Joe, they described sharing with their wives a common understanding of difficulties that needed to be addressed through counselling. For PJ, his doctor was integral to his attendance, as he described, ". . . I wouldn't have gone without my doctor saying 'here do this.' Additionally, PJ talked about his absolute confidence in his physician that encouraged him to seek help from counselling. Although Bill did not share an established and lengthy relationship with his external source, he described her as somebody who demonstrated respect for him, and appeared honest in her referral. As such, through the common experiences of these four men, it appears that the perceived strength in the external source is an important directive in their experience to attend counselling.

Identifies Initial Outcome Expectations. In this shared theme, the men described their initial expectations of counselling. It should be noted that these descriptions were discussed in hindsight after a series of sessions had elapsed, and may not have been explicitly spoken during the actual course of therapy. However, all the participants identified hopes or desires for the outcome of therapy. Spencer's desire was for a specific outcome, which was to improve his relationship with his son, and it was the most explicitly stated of the four participants. Additionally he expressed hope that the benefits would radiate across the family system. For Bill, PJ, and Joe, their desires for counselling were more vague, although all of them was cognizant that improvement was needed in their emotional and social functioning. Nebulous concepts such as "desire for personal growth", "clarification of internal problems," and "peace of mind" were indicated in the experiences of Bill and Joe. For PJ, his hopes and desires for counselling were born out of his previous experience of unhelpful therapy. PJ identified a number of factors that he did not want present in his next experience of counselling, including group therapy, pharmaceuticals, and economically ineffectual treatment. Overall, this theme speaks to outcome expectations that the participants held at the outset of therapy. This would suggest that despite their somewhat laborious entrance into counselling, they still had personal goals and desires, and were not entirely ambiguous about their participation in counselling. Granted, their outcome expectations may not have been explicit or well defined, but they were present, within some latitude, upon entering counselling.

Conveys Preconceptions of Counselling. Within this theme, all of the participants described their preliminary ideas about counselling. In part, Spencer, Bill, and Joe's preconceptions were based upon relational themes. For Spencer and Bill, their impressions were driven by their desire to improve relational functioning with others. For example, Spencer wanted to improve the communication between him and his son, and indicated, his initial idea of counselling was "a lot of verbal communication" and to " . . . get down to the underlying problems and issues and . . . having to expose feelings and emotions." For Bill, his movement into counselling was partly the consequence of lacking social support in his life, and his preconception of counselling included a guarantee that somebody would listen and that counselling would enable him to develop meaningful relationships. Bill also held the preconception that counselling is socially stigmatized, which is consistent with his personal experience of watching others ridicule those in therapy. For Joe, his experience of relating with others was also implicated in his preconception of counselling. As it will be later discussed, Joe had significant difficulties lowering his psychological barriers in counselling and relating genuinely with the counsellor. His initial preconception about counselling encapsulated this relational difficulty as he expected a significant amount of confrontation and theoretical attacks in counselling, where, through interpretation, it can be seen that his psychological barriers would have served a protective function. PJ's preconceptions of counselling do not appear to be associated with relational functioning, however, they were based on the absence of information from his referral source. That is, PJ stated that he had few preconceptions about counselling as he knew little about the process, as he stated, "I didn't have any idea . . .what you do here." This indicates that his initial perception of the unknown in counselling; however, just knew that he "needed it."

Within this theme, Bill and Joe indicated that their initial preconceptions of the counselling process were related to popular media images. Bill talked about the representations of counselling through television as he stated, " you see that type of stuff on TV . . . that's all I had to go by." Similarly, Joe discussed how he had the " . . .vision of the big couch and . . .lying down and just sorta spilling my guts."

Experiences Difficulty in Initial Disclosure. All of the participants expressed initial difficulty in disclosing personal information and revealing their true emotions. Spencer described a sense of embarrassment and anxiety in exposing himself. Similarly, for PJ he stated, "it's always been hard for me to express my own feelings." Joe discussed how he had the desire to "zoom out" when he began to feel vulnerable or when the questioning became too sensitive. For Bill, he expressed difficulty in exposing his true self, not only to others, but also to himself. Furthermore for Bill, he found the challenge in bringing his personal difficulties to the surface, as he stated, " . . . half the time it's just the matter of just having it come out . . . ." In the process of therapy, it could be seen how this initial difficulty of exposure may impede the process; however, it would appear to be the mistake of the therapist to prematurely judge the client as "resistant" as this label would fail to capture the genuine difficulty they had in exposing themselves. Yes, most of these men were guarded in their delivery of information, but their description of the process would suggest some genuine difficulties and not a purposeful withholding of information. Instead, their guardedness appears more related to level of discomfort about being vulnerable. It is here were the popular framework of the voluntary client is at disparity with these clients, as these clients are less than voluntary about exposing themselves personally.

Experiences Emotional Relaxation In Counselling

Within this higher ordered theme, two shared themes were found to be common to all the participants. As the counselling sessions progressed, each of the men talked about how they became more relaxed with the counselling process. They discussed factors, including techniques, that eased their anxieties and their personal difficulties. Additionally, the participants discussed of the benefits of becoming more relaxed and it's consequences on the overall process.

Experiences Relief From Counselling. In this theme, all of the participants described a sense of relief as counselling progressed. In the experiences of both Joe and PJ, they talked about how knowledge of the counselling process greatly reduced their initial feelings of anxiety. For Joe, it was the understanding that he controlled whether the sessions would continue after the initial appointment and the knowledge that he "had a way out" if he did not like the experience. PJ described how information about the process of counselling provided him with a sense of relief, as he stated, "... my anxieties about it were very quickly brought down to nothing as soon as I knew what was going on here at the Clinic." Through both the experiences of Joe and PJ, the importance of preparing and educating the client about the process of therapy is evident.

PJ and Bill described a sense of relief from engaging in conversation. As PJ described it, "there's something really therapeutic about just talking about it." This may be likened, in psychological terms, to "cathartic release" where the client experiences a sense of freedom through the talking about their difficulties. Likewise, Bill shared in this experience, indicating that sometimes it's difficult bringing up the issues, but once they are out in the open, it is a relief.

Within this theme, the participants described the relief from their problems. Spencer talked about how he felt validated through the counsellor's insights and acknowledgments to his difficulties. Also, he discussed a sense of overall relief from the benefits that he had received while in counselling. PJ, too, felt a sense of accomplishment. Although he indicated that the depression had not completely lifted, he described his relief from a particular technique where, together, he noted, "Hey, we handled this." Moreover, Joe described his relief as he talked about his perception of counselling as a positive experience. Consequently, through both the psycho-educational process as well as the sense of validation, accomplishment, the participants were unanimously alleviated within many levels of their experience.

Experiences Increased Comfort with Counselling Process. As the counselling sessions progressed, the participants described their increasing comfort with the process of therapy. As a consequence of their increased sense of ease, the men discussed how they became more engaged in the sessions. Bill captured this experience when he stated, "I'm a lot more willing to impart information and I'm a lot more willing to think about things that I didn't want to think about when I first started." Correspondingly, Joe described how he became more willing to discuss personal issues in counselling as the sessions progressed, "I'm a lot more open to be able to talk about certain things that I . . . probably wouldn't have been able to like six or seven months ago before this all started."

PJ talked about his increased willingness to experiment with unique suggestions as the time progressed. He was perhaps, the most comfortable with the process as he stated, "It didn't really matter what she said, it, it was all fine with me . . . even if it was a really unusual idea, it didn't seem strange to me . . . ."

In Spencer's experience, he felt less ashamed to attend counselling than when he first started. He described how the communication between the counsellor, his son, and himself became more open and natural and their was improved communication. Furthermore, he talked about his increasing comfort level as he described the increasing value of counselling. He stated, ". . . so once I found some intrinsic value . . . being more open and being more vulnerable was fine."

Overall, it is argued that as the comfort level increased among the participants, the sessions became more genuine. This aspect of counselling with non-voluntary clients, may be considered the ultimate success, not within the traditional framework of counselling, but independent of the successes that are typically ascribed to with voluntary clients. That is, non-voluntary clients may enter therapy with more apprehension and difficulties disclosing personal information, and thereby their increased comfort and genuineness in session could be considered one of the paramount successes within the non-voluntary framework.

Perception of Influential Qualities In Counselling

Through personal therapy, the participants described some essential qualities that were common to each of their experiences, which were believed to significantly affect the course of therapy. These themes related to the counselling environment, the counsellor's gender and essential qualities of the counsellor.

Describes a Safe and Supportive Environment as Essential.

Having the opportunity to explore their inner world within a protected and empathetic environment, was essentially valued by the participants. PJ, Spencer, and Joe related the importance of the shelter that counselling has provided. Joe said of counselling, "it's nice to air some concerns once in a while where you don't feel like anyone is judging you, [and] sometimes there are things you don't want to talk to your wife about . . . ." Joe also discussed the importance of trust in the therapeutic relationship. Similarly, PJ and Bill described the importance of a non-judgmental atmosphere, where they did not feel threatened. PJ expressed these sentiments when he stated, ". . . there was no portent of threatening situations. So I did not believe that it was even going to go there . . . which is pretty fundamental if you're trying to get straightened out." Moreover, Spencer talked about the benefits of being able to explore new techniques within the safety of the counselling environment. He described how he and his son were able to implement new suggestions in the home following a counselling session and then have the opportunity to process and debrief the "experiment" at the next session.

Additionally, PJ and Bill talked about the support that they received from their counsellors and how it enhanced their internal experience in counselling. PJ discussed how he listened to his intuitive sense about his counsellor, which told him that, "it was clear that I wasn't going to have a problem with some kind of arrogance." He also described how he sensed that his counsellor genuinely cared, which he indicated, increased his self – confidence. Likewise, Bill described the support that he received from his counsellor. Like Joe, he talked about counselling as a place to air personal difficulties, but he also described how having someone listen is "phenomenal."

Identifies Counsellor's Gender as Significant to Counselling Process. Although all of the participants did not share the same gender of counsellor, each of the participants believed that it was an integral aspect to their experience in therapy. PJ, Bill, and Joe had female counsellors, and they all spoke to the feminist qualities that they benefited from. Bill espoused the need for a woman's perspective in his life. In a similar fashion, Joe described how the feminine qualities or nurturing and mothering made it easier to disclose. Likewise, PJ held the belief that the counsellor's gender facilitated emotional openness, as he talked about how he was able to disclose personal information beyond what he believed he would have been capable otherwise. PJ also discussed how the process was made less threatening by having a female counsellor.

Spencer was the only participant in this study to have a male counsellor, and he too discussed the importance and positive impact of his counsellor's gender. He felt that it was easier to relate to another man about his difficulties, and particularly to another father. He stated, "for me to admit that I'm having difficulties as a father to another man well . . . it's a bit uh more easier to identify with, more relational . . . ." Additionally, Spencer talked about how he believed that his counsellor's gender was beneficial, as it allowing the counsellor to understand from his perspective.

All of the participants talked about how they did not believe therapy would have been as beneficial if they would have had a counsellor of the other gender. PJ, Bill, and Joe described that their emotional needs would not have been addressed, which could imply that they shared similar preconceptions about the emotional differences between men and women, which they projected onto the counselling experience. PJ discussed how the therapeutic relationship would have suffered with an male counsellor and he expressed concern that he would not have received the "same kind of helpful input . . . or listening." Bill talked about how he believed a man would not have been able to facilitate his emotional needs, and Joe admitted that he would have put on a "tough guy" front, implicating everything was okay, if he would have had a male counsellor. For Spencer, he perceived a female counsellor as somewhat threatening, as he expressed concern that he might have been repeatedly suspicious that she would have been siding with his wife's perspective. Overall, counsellor gender was a important and significant influence on the experience of counselling across participants.

Perceives Essential Qualities of Counsellor. Through the discussion of their experiences in counselling, all of the participants unanimously identified core essentials of the counsellor, which were thought to be the driving force behind their success in therapy. This would suggest that these cardinal traits of the counsellor would be an important means of access to the non-voluntary client. One of the most essential features identified by the participants was that the counsellor was genuine. The importance of this attribute follows a logical sequence of reasoning, as these men were guarded about sharing their personal life, and so it was important that they see the counsellor genuinely caring about their well - being. As Joe stated, " . . . she just seemed to be genuinely interested in what I had to say as opposed to . . . just recording everything and asking all the obvious questions . . . ." Furthermore, it could be argued that these men entered counselling with what could be described as "healthy skepticism" and they were predisposed to gauge the authenticity of the counsellor. PJ described this as, "if I perceived her as something like I just came from . . . for therapy, it couldn't work. Because I would detect, even when she's smiling at me, that she's phoney."

The participants also described how the counsellors were sensitive to their needs, which in turn made them feel at ease. Joe described how his counsellor could sense when she was getting to close to something personal, and how she would "take a long route to get me back where I was going." PJ praised his counsellor's sensitivity in her questioning, and he talked about how her phrasing was always delicate, with a non-threatening preamble, which he appreciated. Both Spencer and Bill also talked about the sensitivity of their counsellors, and described how this quality heightened their experience of counselling.

A common theme emerged across participants describing the counsellor as an effective "facilitator" of communication. Analyses of their descriptions suggest that these men valued concrete discussions and productive communication. This style was able to encourage self-reflection for Bill, as he described his experience,

> . . . she tries to break down what I'm saying so that she can understand then, then turns it around and asks me if that's what I'm saying. And it makes me think about what I'm actually saying.

Spencer also praised his counsellor, as he stated, "... [the] counsellor did a good job of setting up the framework for some productive communication . . . ." Furthermore, PJ and Joe discussed how the counsellor was able to promote conversations that they would have otherwise avoided in any other circumstances.

The participants also valued the counsellors' competence and perceived expertise. They talked about the goal setting, tools, techniques, and insight that made the counselling process helpful. The participants perceived the counsellors as skilled and professional. Moreover, appreciation was extended to the counsellors' abilities to provide new perspectives and alternative viewpoints to gently challenge their thinking.

Counselling Has Encouraged Change and Growth

All of the participants acknowledged particular benefits of counselling. They talked about change that had occurred in their life, and the subsequent improvements, including a new perception of themselves. As well, all the participants spoke of a better understanding of the self, which they attributed to discovering through the process of counselling. Within Counselling Has Encourage Change and Growth, the participants also discussed their willingness to integrate counselling and its lessons into their daily lives. Overall, this higher ordered theme captures the positive changes and integration espoused by the participants.

Acknowledges Change Through Counselling. All of the participants indicated that they experienced change in their lives by attending counselling. Both PJ and Bill acknowledged that even though they are not "cured," counselling has helped them initiate the process of change. Bill also discussed how counselling has brought heightened awareness into his life; although, he believes that more learning is required. Joe also discussed how counselling has facilitated personal awareness, as he described how counselling encouraged him to bring issues to the surface and change the way he thinks about himself and other people. Spencer believed that the goals of counselling were achieved and change was evident in the improvement of communication between him and his son. Furthermore, both Spencer and PJ believed that change manifested itself in the improvement of their daily functioning. For Spencer, he described how the positives of counselling extending to other relationships, both work and family. PJ talked about his change from initial unwillingness to attend counselling to internal motivated attendance. He also described the change in his daily functioning as he no longer has as difficult a time of waking and starting his day than prior to counselling.

Recognizes Internal Change in Self. Through their experience of counselling, all of the participants acknowledged changes in their internal perception of themselves. PJ described his increasing self-competence and feelings of self-worth. Joe talked about being less critical of himself and more willing to trust others. Bill described how counselling has encouraged self – reflection more than he's "ever done before," and Spencer discussed how the increased self – awareness has been beneficial with regards to his examining his own expectations and behaviors. Spencer also described how counselling helped change his internal perceptions of guilt and burden to lesser feeling of culpability. Moreover, Bill and Spencer talked about freedom to be authentic to oneself, which was a novel compared to when they first started counselling. Bill described the increase in his self confidence as he realized that he held the ability to solve his own difficulties. He stated, ". . . it's helping me so that if I get into the same type of process in the future I can come up with the answer myself . . . that's what I like, it's more beneficial than anything so far." Bill also valued the increase in his cognitive flexibility.

Gains Understanding of Self. Counselling provided an arena for the participants to gain a better understanding of themselves. As a consequence of the both the experience of internal and external change, they developed a greater understanding of themselves and how they interact with the outside world. For Bill, he was able to recognize the unhelpful pattern of narrow thinking that previously dominated his life. He identified the benefits of expanding his thinking, which allowed him significant personal reflection. Bill also acknowledged a greater understanding of himself when he realized that he could solve his own difficulties if he was honest with himself and applied the lessons of counselling. Bill gained the understanding that counselling's help is finite and he was responsible for his future. Furthermore, Bill's understanding of his interactions with others led him to new insights about his behaviors as he stated,

> Especially in dealing with people and that may very well be why I don't have a lot of friends or have friends is that the way I talk to people. . . . I know I'm very abrupt and very negative and in your face type thing, that people just shut off whenever I'm around. I'm realizing that I turn people off . . . .

Joe's understanding of himself was found in his description of revealing latent memories. Despite his difficulties in dredging the past into the present, he acknowledged that it was useful because, "I think maybe it was something I had to think about. You know, like to be able to maybe to make some progress." As such, he recognized the value in an exercise that he would have typically avoided, and thereby gained a new perspective about healing himself from within. PJ found new understanding when he used journaling techniques to connect with himself. He described how on some days he was unable to remember his thoughts or feelings and the journal provided him with a sense of understanding about his own process of depression. Additionally, PJ's doctor led him to further understanding in regards depression, as his metaphor of living with a broken soul resonated loudly with PJ's experience. Spencer also gained an understanding about himself, in part, through his ability to disclose personal information in counselling. He described how he was "quite surprised" that he was able to release more than he originally anticipated. Through this experience, Spencer realized that he could safely extend his boundaries with positive effects. Furthermore, Spencer gained a better understanding about familial roles and his relationships with others. He attributed counselling as enabling him to better understand the reasons and functions for these ascribed roles.

Experiences Motivation to Integrate Counselling. As the counselling progressed, all of the participants expressed a willingness to integrate their experiences of counselling into their daily lives. Each of the men's positive experience nurtured a sense of motivation to continue with their personal improvement. Joe talked about how he was striving to integrate counselling in his life. He explained how he was inspired to apply counselling at home, and was vehement in his position that instead of making counselling "dead time" and using it as a forum to "spout off," he was readily incorporating its lessons. Additionally, Joe extended his motivation for counselling into the future as he considered counselling as becoming a "way of life" for him, where he could relieve himself of some "excess baggage" and connect with himself. PJ also talked about applying the lessons from counselling, as he discussed the usefulness at home. He described the depression as lifting, albeit slowly, which encouraged his motivation to continue with daily integration. Additionally, PJ talked about how counselling has made him more accountable to himself, which was a new development in his life. He even described how he felt accountable for his depression. This may suggest that in PJ's experience, he was becoming more responsible and motivated to be an active part in battling his depression. Bill talked about his appreciation for the increased reflection that counselling brought into his life. Through counselling he is motivated to think more and utilize his "brain power," which is a new experience for him. He also described how his motivation to improve was linked to his ability to solve his own difficulties, which created a healthy sense of autonomy within. Spencer's increased sense of motivation to integrate counselling was a reflection of the visible improvement in counselling. That is, he described how he became more willing to participate in the sessions, once the counselling proved itself valuable. Once the value was apparent, counselling became "self-motivational." Spencer also described how he was surprised that the extensive application of the counselling techniques that he learned and he admitted that he utilized them at work, with success. Overall, Spencer was committed to apply the lessons from counselling into his daily life.

Through this higher ordered theme, the success of counselling can been seen across these participants. Mostly, the success involved changes in perception, better understanding of self and others, as well as motivation to integrate counselling. These qualities are traditionally found within the voluntary framework of counselling, and indicate that similar success is attainable with non-voluntary clients. However, the qualitative difference is likely found in route to this achievement, when considering the "roadblocks" that were described by these participants.

Experiences Increased Receptivity Towards Counselling

As a qualified measure of success, all of the participants discussed their increased receptivity to counselling. Within this higher ordered theme, each of the participants discussed their willingness to consider future counselling for themselves, as well as advocating counselling to others. It can be seen through this shared experience the culmination of their increased comfort level with counselling as well as their perceived benefits of participating in therapy.

Expresses Willingness to Consider Future Counselling. All of the participants talked about their increased receptivity to counselling. Through their experience they recognized the long term benefits. Bill described how he did not want to become dependent on counselling although he would be more open to the possibility of seeking future help. He stated, "I mean I'd be a lot more open to the possibility than I was initially this time around, obviously." Similarly, Spencer talked about his increased receptivity as a function of his positive experience. He indicated that he would only consider counselling again because of the positive outcome; although he would not hesitate to seek help in the future if circumstances became dire once again. As previously mentioned, Joe began to consider counselling as a new way of life. He likened future help as similar to the maintenance of a car, where, "it just might be a good idea to . . . go in for six months and just sorta you know, let things loose." Likewise, PJ talked about seeking help again if his stress level were to go "sky high." He also talked about possibly resuming counselling with his current counsellor if necessary.

As such, all of the participants indicated that, although they might not jump at the next opportunity to resume counselling, they would undoubtedly consider it again if the circumstances called for intervention.

Experiences Increased Willingness to Advocate for Counselling. The participants' attitudes toward counselling changed significantly over the course of therapy. In the beginning, all of the men described some sort of apprehension towards the counselling process which manifested itself in their initial guardedness, shame, or wariness. However, as the sessions progressed, improvement was identified and all the participants found some benefit in their attendance. As a consequence, barriers lowered, productive work was identified, and an overall sense of receptivity emerged. One of the hallmarks of these processes, was that all of the men talked about their willingness to advocate counselling to others. This would suggest that the participants became believers in the utility and function of counselling. Joe simply stated, "I'd recommend it to other people." Both Spencer and Bill indicated that it is because of their positive experience, they would be more inclined to let others know that help is available. However, it was PJ who became the largest supporter of the group in his willingness to share in the benefits of counselling. He described how his hesitant attitudes dissolved and now he would, "tell anybody to go to counselling." He believes that counselling has been the most useful endeavor in his life, so far, as he talked about how counselling could change your life. Furthermore, he discussed how counselling can definitely help those in trouble and how, since his experience, he now he feels obligated to inform those who he sees in need of services. Concerning the latter, he stated, "I would be quite direct about it, because I think that's what my responsibility would be."

Therefore, if success were measured on the basis of advocacy, all of these participants would be considered success stories. Each of the participants talked about their increased receptivity and willingness to share their experiences with others. Moreover, lending their support in terms of educating others about the benefits, results in a reciprocal relationship between counselling and the non-voluntary client that may be useful in encouraging similar clients to attend.

The following section contains the overall synthesis of the shared experience across participants. Themes that were common to all the participants were incorporated into this overall synthesis.

Overall Synthesis of the Shared Experience

Although the participants had varying degrees of awareness with regards to their personal difficulties, the participants indicated that they had been carrying the burden of significant internal damage for some time. Each participant discussed how he felt a kind of environmental strain, whether it was from the threat of separation, the lack of social supports, the loss of employability, or financial strain, which influenced their decision to attend counselling.

All the participants acknowledged that without the sense of security in their external source, their attendance in therapy would not have been as expedient or even attempted. Before the hurdle of attending the first appointment had been accomplished, each of the participants acknowledged that they had created some expectations of counselling outcomes. However, despite a desire for an outcome, that may or may not have been explicitly stated at the outset of therapy, the participants experienced a notable sense of apprehension towards the counselling process. Questions such as time commitments and financial liability surfaced within their apprehension, which led them to speak of the difficulties in participating with little knowledge of the process. All of the participants discussed their preconceptions about counselling, which were related to acknowledged deficiencies in their life, fears about counselling, and stereotypical media images of therapy.

During the initial stages of counselling, all of the participants described significant difficulties in disclosing personal problems and relating on an emotional level. They discussed the uncomfortable feeling that disclosure initially produced, and some indicated that they guarded their image of normalcy as a reaction to this difficulty. However, as the counselling sessions progressed, all of the participants related that they experienced some sense of relief, both in regards to the counselling process as well as from the difficulties they were carrying. Additionally, all of the participants discussed their experience of increased comfort with the counselling process and the benefits of being more engaged in the therapeutic process.

All the participants identified important aspects of both the counselling process as well as the counsellor. First, all spoke to the importance of feeling safe and supported within the counselling environment. Second, all discussed that the counsellor's gender significantly impacted their experience of counselling. Although all of the participants did not share the same gender of counsellor, all identified that their counsellors' gender was integral, and they all indicated that counselling would not have been as beneficial if the counsellor had been of the other sex. Third, all of the participants described essential qualities of the counsellor, including that all praised their counsellor's ability to provide effective communication and thought-provoking dialogue. Furthermore, the participants indicated that the genuineness, sensitivity, and sense of ease created by the counsellor were all cardinal qualities. Perception of competency and skill were also noted as important.

As a consequence of counselling, all of the participants acknowledged that change occurred. All discussed a transformation in their internal perceptions of themselves. This change was described as positive and many discussed increased feelings related to increased self-worth. Furthermore, all of the participants indicated that, through counselling, they gained an improved understanding of themselves, including the consequences of the personal reflection that the counselling process encouraged.

All of the participants talked about their increased motivation to handle life's difficulties and expressed a desire to integrate the lessons from counselling into their daily lives. Moreover, there was an undisputed consensus that all would be willing to consider seeking counselling again, if necessary. Through their experience, they all indicated that they would be less hesitant to recommend counselling to others than when they initially started therapy, and they all espoused the extensive benefits that counselling is able to provide.

In the following section, a general discussion of the findings and their implications for future research is presented. The limitations of the study are also considered.

Discussion

In this section, a presentation of the study's important findings is discussed in reference to the current literature. The study's limitations are also considered as well as implications for future research.

Research Findings

Through the use of the phenomenological method, it was the researcher's aim to attain a greater understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It is important to point out that some of the findings from this present study are relative to quantitative studies. Additionally, some of these findings are consistent with theoretical papers which have investigated reluctant, involuntary clients and more generally, men's participation in counselling. However, the overall structural description of the shared experience of non-voluntary men in counselling is new. A description regarding men's experience of non-voluntary counselling has not been formulated prior to this study, as the phenomenological method has not been specifically applied to the study of non-voluntary clients.

One of the important features of the participants' experiences prior to attending counselling was the shared sense of significant environmental strain. Research shows that men, overall, utilize physical and mental health care services at a lower rate than women (Jackson, 1991; O'Brien, 1988; Rafuse, 1993). Some have argued that men do not seek help because they are less likely than women to interpret mild depression or a low general state well-being as signs of emotional problems (Kessler, Brown, & Bronnan, 1981). As well, the majority of the participants described their desire to live up to social expectations of masculinity, such as "keeping the stiff upper lip" and wanting to be "in control" of their emotions. Similarly, researchers have demonstrated that men's attendance in counselling is inhibited because of social norms associated with conventional masculinity, at least within Western society, such as inexpressiveness, competition, and independence (Balswick, 1979; Balswick & Peck, 1971; Pleck, 1979). Moreover, from the present findings, the results indicate that these men tried to "tough it out" before seeking counselling, resulting in significantly elevated levels of distress upon entering therapy. Similarly, in the study of Guillebeaux, Storm, and Demaris (1986), the men did not perceive their problems as very or somewhat mild. Instead, it appeared that the men were either unaware of their problems at the mild stage or had considered seeking professional help only as a last resort when they perceived that their problems had become serious. Consequently, it could be argued that when men enter into counselling, they are likely experiencing acute emotional difficulties, which have potentially arrested their ability to function on a daily basis.

Another important finding of this study relates to the men's relationships with their external sources of recommendation. All of the men indicated that they would not have attended therapy without the security from the people who encouraged them to attend. This would suggest that for men who are hesitant to initiate therapy, the trust and respect that they had in their referral source was integral to their initial attendance. The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), in part, can address the notable importance of the referral source in non-voluntary male help seeking behavior. The theory proposed that the more the man evaluates an act as positive and believes that others favor it, the greater chance he will perform it. Therefore, with respect to these participants, their likelihood of attending counselling was increased as a result of the perception that others (i.e., their external sources) believed in the benefits of counselling. This support likely helped the participants to consider counselling. Furthermore, studies have shown that most men receive their support from females in regards to physical or mental help seeking behavior (Graffy, 1990; Norcross, Ramirez, & Palinkas, 1996; Tudiver & Talbot, 1999). This is consistent with the present findings, as external sources of recommendations were female in three out of the four cases. Likewise, Norcross et al. (1996) found a strong positive influence of females on the help-seeking behavior of men. Men were almost three times more likely than women to be influenced to seek health care, physically or mentally, by a member of the opposite sex. As such, by combining the existing findings with previous research, it appears that the chances that a non-voluntary man seeking psychological help are increased when the external source is supportive, genuinely believes in the benefits of counselling, and is female.

A common experience across participants was their difficulties in disclosing personal information. Jourard's (1971) work on self-disclosure highlights the social constraints on male expression of affect as he found that in general, American men had lower levels of personal self-disclosure than women. Additionally, because of gender role socialization, Williams and Myer (1992) argue that men often perceive themselves as failures and experienced shame for having the need to express their emotions. Likewise, all of the participants in this study described their shame, suspicion, and their difficulty in the "unknown" about the counselling process. Restrictive emotionality is common for those who find it difficult to seek help from others (Fischer & Turner, 1970) and individuals who arrive at the counsellor's office under some external pressure are typically embarrassed, resistant, afraid, and often suspicious (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1992; Riordan & Martin, 1993; Ritchie, 1986).

Some counsellors may espouse the tradition of trying to "break through the client's resistance" through confrontation. However, this may lead to more problems, as one of the participants described his desire to retreat inward when the questions became too pointed or too personal in the initial stages of therapy. Similarly, research has shown that in some cases confrontation may actually increase the client's resistance and may lead to premature termination (Miller & Rollnick, 1991; Miller & Sovereign, 1989; Patterson & Forgatch, 1985). Consequently, more effective approaches have been indicated in working with resistant clients. Findings from this present study suggest that education about counselling is beneficial, as all of the men described a significant decrease in their anxiety levels once they were aware of "what was going on." Similarly, Ritchie (1986) suggests that counsellors should educate the men in regards to the process of therapy by making the counselling situation less ambiguous. Furthermore, across participants in this study, their willingness to disclose and actively participate in the counselling process was positively correlated with the counsellors' information and support. Likewise, Osborn (1999) suggests that defining the parameters in terms of the counselling process increases the probability that the client will participate. She also notes that participation increases when the clients sense that their views are important. Another approach is to examine the client's expectations in order to reduce resistance to the process (Hartman & Reynolds, 1987; Kottler, 1991; Seligman, 1990). All of the men carried expectations into the counselling forum, although they may not have been explicitly stated at the outset. Collaboratively clarifying goals and breaking them down into manageable pieces, and discussing whose goals they are is an important part of the counselling process (Tohn & Oshlag, 1996). As such, it would appear beneficial to identify these expectations in order to help with the counselling process. Findings from this study also suggest that the participants maintained an initial desire to guard their personal information and attempt to control the image that they were projecting to the counsellor. A strategy that has been professed within the literature to help with such situations is to avoid asking questions (Brodsky & Lichtenstein, 1999). Although this may sound impossible at first, Brodsky and Lichtenstein argue that asking questions can be detrimental to successful therapy with unwilling clients, as the questions can be seen as an intrusion to the client's privacy, "despite being represented as a constructive gesture of good will and interest" (p. 215). To encourage openness, Brodsky and Lichtenstein suggest that the counsellor make observations, transform questions into statements, make statements about oneself, and comment on the process. Indeed, two of the participants explicitly stated their relief in their counsellors' non-intrusive manner of conversation, which involved many of the aforementioned aspects. Furthermore, another suggestion for working with such a population, whom have difficulties disclosing personal information in the initial stages of therapy, is to refrain from exploring feeling states (Allen & Gordon, 1990; Heppner & Gonzales, 1987) as to meet the client on his own relational "turf."

Perhaps one of the most intriguing findings of this study was the participants' emphasis on the importance of their counsellors' gender. Although there is little information in the literature addressing the perceived relationship between counsellor gender and client experience in counselling, Feldstein (1979) found that male clients, disclosed most to “feminine” female counsellors and disclosed least to “masculine” female counsellors. In Feldstein’s study, feminine sex-typed counsellors were projected as more warm, supportive, and emotional. This may explain, in part, why those participants who identified disclosure as difficult felt a sense of relief for having a female counsellor. However, this does not fully explain the remaining participant, whose experience with a male counsellor was perceived as beneficial. One explanation as to why this latter perception may exist could be related to perceived credibility of the counsellor, as the participant felt more comfortable disclosing his parental difficulties to another father. Lee, Hallberg, Jones, and Haase (1980) examined how a counsellor’s gender affects the clients perceived credibility of the counsellor on the counselling topic. The findings of their study suggest that male counsellors are seen as more credible when the presenting issue is vocational in nature and female counsellors are seen as more credible surrounding the area of child rearing. The findings of Lee et al. (1980) cannot be generalized as child rearing was the foremost issue for the participant who preferred the male counsellor. Thus, in this study, the relationship between counsellor credibility, presenting issue, and counsellor gender may be interrelated; however, the belief that female counsellors are more credible on the topic of child rearing cannot be generalized. Additionally a male counsellor might have been more desirable in this situation because of the participant’s fear that a female counsellor would have sided with his wife’s perceptions of the family difficulties. Indeed, O’Brien (1988) suggests that a father attending family counselling with a male therapist may feel that he is not entering into a women’s territory, and that he, “might even have an ally who can understand him” (p. 116). Nonetheless, it appears that the findings from this present study indicate that counsellor gender plays a significant role in the non-voluntary client's perception of counselling.

All of the participants identified specific counsellor characteristics that were integral to their success in counselling, including genuineness, sensitivity, and the perception of competency. Strong's theory of social influence (1968; Strong, Welsh, Corcoran, & Hoyt, 1992) speaks to the significance of these counsellor attributes. In Strong's theory, the notion of counsellor characteristics, as perceived by the client, greatly influences the counsellor's ability to facilitate client change. Consequently, Strong argues that counsellors must establish themselves as expert, trustworthy, and attractive to their clients. Additionally, Bordin (1979) found that the establishment of a positive therapeutic alliance appears to be an essential step in reducing resistance and it is also related to eventual outcome (Kokotovic & Tracey, 1990). Kazdin (1994) demonstrated in his study of involuntary adolescents that relationship skills of the therapist were centrally important to treatment effectiveness. Although the age of the population in Kazdin's study is unlike the present one, it could be argued that his findings could be generalized to this present population given the research that has indicated similar struggles in establishing a working relationship. That is, the therapeutic relationship conflicts with the non-voluntary man's relationship style, as men, in general, supposedly eschew intimacy and embrace power (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Good & May, 1987; Heppner & Gonzales, 1987). Consequently, to mediate this relationship style, the counsellor is required to effect positive relationship building skills, similar to what was espoused in Kazdin's study. Furthermore, Henderson & Lyddon (1997) suggest that counsellors need to spend a significant amount of time focusing on the relationship and rapport building more with male clients, and this study would support this recommendation in terms of working with non-voluntary male clients. Additionally, the experience of empathy and support was a consistent experience across participants, and relates well to the development of a positive working relationship. Likewise, Stone (1981) argues that a therapeutic relationship based on mutual trust, and displaying empathy and support to the client is an important way in which to foster trust. Another interesting finding from this current study is that two out of the four participants expressly indicated that "just talking" is beneficial. Likewise, Hunt (1985) found that men who persist in counselling begin to accept the value of "just talking." Overall, "success in counselling depends less on specific interventions or theoretical approaches than it does on the attitudes and skillfulness of the therapist" (Seligman & Gaaserud, 1994, p. 33) and this tenet appears consistent across the experiences of the participants in this study.

Relationship status between the counsellor and the client has also been studied in terms of power differentials, which is an important element to consider when working with clients who attend counselling non-voluntarily. Good, Dell, and Mintz (1989) argue that men may avoid entering therapy because of an aversion to being placed in a subordinate role, which conflicts with their desire to live up to society's requirements of male power. However, in this study, the findings suggested a low level of power differential as perceived by the clients. An explanation for this could be related to the Lee's (1997) finding that men were less motivated to maintain power when they were in an equal status relationship. With respect to the current findings, three out of the four men explicitly indicated that attending a training institution was desirable, in part, because they felt like they were both giving and receiving help from their student clinicians. This perception of reciprocity could likely be related to the sense of an equal status relationship, where both parties are benefiting from the client seeking help.

Another important finding from this current study is that all of the participants indicated an increased receptivity to counselling. This was evident in their amenability to seeking future counselling as well as their willingness to recommend counselling to others. In part, this enhanced willingness could be a function of their increased knowledge and comfort with the counselling process as well as their perception that, overall, counselling was beneficial. As well, increased emotionality likely played a role in these men's willingness to consider future counselling, which mirrors the results of Good, Dell, and Mintz (1989) who demonstrated that men's restrictive emotionality decreased their likelihood of seeking future psychological help. Furthermore, the present findings are consistent with other research that found positive attitude changes over the process of family therapy with men. Guillebeaux, Storm, and Demaris (1986) found that 94% rated the outcome of therapy as somewhat or very helpful, and, overall, they were enthusiastic about their experiences in therapy, inclined to seek therapy again, and willing to share their new perceptions of therapy with others. Similar to the participants in this study, the men in the aforementioned study recommended that men receive greater education concerning the counselling process in order to increase men's participation in counselling and that society's traditional definition of manliness be changed. Consequently Guillebeaux et al. assert that counsellor's should actively engage in working towards changing the image of counselling as something that "weak" men do, to a reasonable way of solving personal difficulties. As such, counsellors should encourage willing male clients to share their experiences with other men or to address groups that seek information about the counselling process.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this study, and perhaps the most surprising was the participants' enthusiasm to participate in the present study. One would almost expect clients who were attending counselling non-voluntarily to be apprehensive about sharing their experience. However, the findings indicated an exponential increase in their receptivity to the counselling process, which perhaps was one of the bigger motivating factors to be involved in this study. This would suggest that non-voluntary men have not been given sufficient opportunity to share their experiences within the literature, and as a consequence more research is needed to understand this population. As the findings demonstrated, overgeneralizing and stereotyping certain client groups (Gambrill, 1990), such as non-voluntary clients, increases the risk of underestimating the potential of their willingness to work on their problems and be successful in therapy.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations in this present study. First, because the researcher is the tool through which the data is collected and analyzed, the results are influenced by the researcher's biases. Rigorous self-reflection and bracketing were undertaken throughout the process of this study in order to suspend researcher presuppositions; however, it is inevitable that a degree of interpretation filtered through the process. Nonetheless, these presuppositions and biases have been articulated for the reader, so as to provide a perspective from which the research process was conducted.

A second limitation to this present study relates to the generalizability of the findings. The approach of this study was discovery – oriented, and as such, it would be inappropriate to generalize the findings of this study to other environmental contexts, such as involuntary clients within a prison system. Similarly, it would be inappropriate to extend these findings to the experience of all non-voluntary men, for a number of reasons. First, these results may not apply broadly to the experience of all non-voluntary men, as all of the participants were willing to discuss their experiences of counselling. Second, these participants may be extreme in the sense that all indicated an overall positive experience and all professed an increased receptivity to counselling in the future. A third reason to explain the difficulty in extending these findings to all male non-voluntary clients, is that not all of the themes found in the within-persons analysis were found within the between-persons analysis. For example, in this study, some themes were not always shared across participants, as was demonstrated in the shared themes of three but not four of the participants. A possible explanation for this finding could be that the fourth participant may have shared in the experience, but it was not indicated in the course of the data collection interview. Another possible reason may be that an increase in participants may have given strength to the absence of a particular experience, which would have reduced the likelihood of it being included in the overall synthesis. This limitation would suggest that this study could have potentially missed qualities that might have been relevant if further participants were used. Therefore, validity of this research project, if such a term could apply to phenomenology, can only be established a posteriori when the findings resonate with another male non-voluntary client in counselling.

A third limitation of the study is the reliance on the awareness level of the participant. The phenomenological method requires the participant to reflect on their own experience, which raises some concerns. First, aspects of the phenomenon may have existed outside the participant's realm of awareness. That is, all of the present findings are tied to the participants' awareness, and further aspects of the phenomenon may have been missed because these circumstances were not entirely conscious to the participants. A second difficulty in relying on the participants' awareness is related to the time that elapsed between the experience and the re-telling of the experience in the data gathering interview. That is, the participants' level of awareness regarding an aspect of the phenomenon could have potentially been altered, e.g., forgotten, embellished, etc., which would have subsequently influenced the significance, or lack thereof, concerning a particular experience.

Lastly, another limitation to this study is related to the reliance on language with respect to representing the experiences of the participants. First, words often indicate but seldom completely capture the range of experience, and as such, the vehicle of language may have limited the participants' descriptions. That is, the phenomenon may have lost some of its meaning as the participants' experience was transformed into words. Furthermore, the description of the phenomenon, as unveiled by the research, was also bound by language. Obviously language was the chosen vehicle in order to elucidate the phenomenon; however, its difficulties in capturing the essence of the phenomenon, that is, squeezing the phenomenon into the most appropriate words, possibly limited the findings of this study.

Implications for Future Research

Emerging from this discovery – oriented study are a number of recommendations for future research regarding non-voluntary men in counselling. Perhaps one of the most interesting discoveries from this study is the perception of the counsellor's gender as significant to the process of therapy. Future research could investigate this perception using a quantitative approach, by examining the relationship between the non-voluntary client and their perceived importance of counsellor gender. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate any possible differences in perceptions before and after the counselling process.

More information is needed about the nature of help-seeking behavior in regards to non-voluntary men. The present study indicated that a significant level of environmental strain was influential to their attendance. Future research could gain a better understanding of this population by examining the time lapse between the identified stressor(s) (e.g., presenting issue) and the time in which it took the non-voluntary client to enter into therapy. Furthermore, this information could be cross – referenced with the client's rating of the level of personal distress immediately prior to the first session. Furthermore, it was shown in this study that the external source had a significant impact on the men's attendance in therapy. Consequently, further investigation is needed with regards to relationships among the level of perceived support, gender of external source, and willingness to attend therapy.

The results of this study indicated that the men had extreme difficulties initially disclosing personal information. At this point it is difficult to determine the influences related to this difficulty for non-voluntary men. As such, future research could attempt to delineate factors, such as gender role conflict, influence of gender on disclosure, influence of non-voluntary status, and survey men's experiences with regards to this phenomenon. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to examine any differences or similarities regarding perceived disclosure difficulties between non-voluntary and voluntary clients.

Given that all the participants in this study espoused a positive counselling experience, this study was unable to investigate unhelpful counselling experiences from the perspective of a non-voluntary client. Although investigating such a process would be difficult, given the logistics of identifying this population, and then soliciting their participation, the results would likely be insightful. Furthermore, the results of this proposed study would provide a valuable contrast to the present findings.

Through this study, all of the participants indicated a change in their willingness to inform others about the benefits of counselling. As such, future research, perhaps involving focus groups with willing men, could address how to make counselling more accessible to non-voluntary clients. This could perhaps normalize the experience of counselling and promote the benefits to others who may be hesitant to seek therapy on their own.

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Appendix A

Study Description

Principle Researcher: Lori Goodkey
Department of Educational Psychology
6-102 Education North
University of Alberta
Phone: 492-3746 (Education Clinic)

I am an Educational Psychology Graduate student at the University of Alberta, currently working on my Master of Education Degree in Counselling Psychology. For my Master's thesis project, I am investigating men's experiences of the counselling process. More specifically, I am interested in talking to men who were referred to counselling on the basis of someone else's advice or encouragement.

This is a voluntary project, and you may participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. Your name nor identity will not be given out to anyone. The questions should take approximately 5 minutes to answer. Dependent on your responses, a further interview of approximately one-hour may be scheduled, at your convenience, to talk more about your experience in counselling. There may be some risk that responding to questions about your experience of counselling may cause you distress, and additional counselling will be made available if you wish.

Appendix B

Informed Consent

I, ______________________________, am aware that the purpose of this project is to understand the perspective of the counselling process through the experience of men who were referred for counselling under someone else's advice or encouragement. I understand that it is hoped this information will be helpful in developing better ways of helping individuals in counselling. I understand that this will involve completing a questionnaire of approximately 5 minutes, and based on my responses, I may be contacted to complete an interview of approximately 1 hour, at a time of my convenience. I understand that the project is being conducted as a partial fulfillment for Master's of Education degree, under the supervision of Dr. Derek Truscott of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta.

I agree to participate in the project and I am willing to share my experiences of counselling I received at the Education Clinic with Lori Goodkey. I understand that should I be interviewed, the meeting will be tape recorded in order that it can be transcribed for later analysis. I am aware that upon transcription, the audio tape will be destroyed and a copy of the transcript will be included in the final project. I realize that my participation in the project is completely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any time without prejudice. If I choose to withdraw from the project, any information about me or any data that I provide will be destroyed. I am also aware that if discussion of my experiences raises any concerns for me that I wish to discuss further with a counsellor, Lori Goodkey will confidentially suggest individuals that I might contact.

I am aware that all information associated with this study is strictly confidential and that my identity, or that of any persons that I mention, will be known only to Lori Goodkey and will not be revealed at any time. When transcribing the interview recordings, Lori Goodkey will use pseudonyms (i.e. false names) for my name and for those of any persons that I mention. These pseudonyms will also be used in the writing of the final report. Any details in the interview recordings that might identify me or any persons that I mention will also be changed during the transcribing.

I, ____________________, give my informed consent to participate in the project.
Name of Participant

....
Date

....
Signature of Participant

....
Signature of Witness

....
Telephone Number of Participant

Special Instructions for phoning:

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. What were your expectations of counselling prior to attending the Education clinic?
2. What did you think counselling would be like?
3. What were your reasons for attending counselling?
4. Describe the influence __________ (the person) had on the decision to attend counseling.
5. Has ________'s influence continued while you are attending counselling? Please describe
6. Describe what it was like for you to discuss personal issues in counselling
7. Describe your relationship with your counsellor
8. What qualities, if any, do you like about your counsellor?
9. What qualities, if any, do you dislike about your counsellor?
10. Describe a memorable event that occurred in a counselling session
11. How do your initial counselling sessions compare with your current sessions?
12. Describe your current impressions of counselling
13. What, if anything, did you find helpful about counselling?
14. What, if anything, did you find unhelpful about counselling?
15. Would you seek counselling again? Why or why not?
16. Would you recommend counselling to a friend who was in a difficult situation? Why or why not?
17. How, if at all, has counselling affected your life in general?

Appendix D

Thematic Abstraction of PJ's Experience

		Two Levels of Abstraction	
	Excerpts from Protocols	Paraphrase	Theme(s)
1.	I didn't have any idea . . . what you do here.	I didn't know how the Clinic operated	Initial Perception of the Unknown
2.	Counselling at first . . . I just thought as another job I was going to have to do to try and get myself out of my mess.	Initial perception of counselling as one more obligation to my predicament	Felt Compelled to Seek Counselling
3.	Partly I thought it would be expensive, and partly I thought I wouldn't be able to afford it, or that I couldn't put in the time required. I had some misgivings about it, and that kind of stuff.	Initial perception of counselling as financially burdening and time consuming contributed to apprehension	Apprehension Influenced by Time and Financial Expectations
4.	I saw it as, uh, something that I wouldn't have gone to without my doctor saying, "here do this."	I would not have attended counselling without my doctor's prompting	Doctor's Influence Integral to Attendance
5.	I was . . . really quite relieved when I found out it would be a girl that I was seeing.	Knowing that it was going to be a female counsellor brought relief	Counsellor's Gender Brought Relief
6.	I feel less threatened to divulge things to a female therapist than to a, a male	Perception of exposing oneself to a female counsellor is less threatening than to a male counsellor	Perception of Female Counsellor as Less Threatening
7.	. . . one of my resentments of the previous psychiatrist was kinda heavy handed medication regimen	Disdain for intensive drug therapy prescribed by prior psychiatrist	Disdain of Previous Pharmaceutical Therapy
8.	I didn't want any more of that and I didn't know that I wouldn't have more of that because . . . I didn't know what his (the student's supervisor) power was or what his influence was or any of those things.	Unsure whether I was going to face more of the same type of therapy that I was trying to get away from	Concern of Facing More Unhelpful Therapy
9.	So . . . my anxieties about it were very quickly brought down to nothing as soon as I knew what was going on here at the Clinic.	Education about counselling process greatly reduced initial anxieties	Information About Counselling Process Eased Anxieties

10. Well, I was hoping it wouldn't be some of this uh, group therapy thing where they share all their grim stuff . . . cuz I've been through that once before and . . . I sure didn't feel like I was getting help out of it.	Previous experience of group therapy was not personally beneficial	Unhelpful Experience of Group Therapy
11. Well when I found out it would be one-on-one, and possibly somebody looking through the glass, um, I thought that was great.	Intimate setting with possible live supervision was appealing	Perception of Counselling Setting as Appealing
12. . . . when I saw that it was a student situation I felt like if I could help somebody learn something important that would be good	Helping the student clinician learn felt worthwhile	Recognized Attraction to Being a Helper
13. I may have started the first steps of this thing involuntarily but then it quickly became my project and. . . . I bought into the whole thing pretty quickly.	Initial unwillingness to attend counselling was quickly replaced by internal desire	Perceived Rapid Change from Involuntary to Voluntary
14. I tried various other psychology clinics that didn't seem to have anything to offer me and so this one came up as a suggestion.	Previous attempts at other psychological services were useless	Experience of Previous Therapy Unhelpful
15. . . . somebody would sit in a chair and ask me questions and say it would cost a hundred bucks	Previous experience of passive or minimal therapeutic intervention with a high financial cost	Previous Therapy Wasn't Cost Effective
16. You have to be under therapy of some sort and this qualifies.	Counselling requirement fulfilled by attending the Clinic	Counselling Met External Requirement
17. I'll go on long term (disability), I have to anyhow, cuz I can't handle this anymore . . . I went into a really deep depression – sleep all day and stuff like that I'd never do before – no energy	Resigned to accepting Long Term Disability given overwhelming depression	Loss of Employability a Function of Depression
18. I'm not a violent guy, but . . . it just comes, "whoosh" like out of a fountain . . . it just comes boiling out of there. It's in there somewhere (pointed to chest) . . . so there's some deep damage some place I guess.	Experience of intense anger brings awareness of profound, underlying damage	Awareness of Internal Damage
19. . . . I completely trust him . . . . I have extreme confidence in this guy. So I had complete confidence in his referral.	Extreme confidence in doctor leads to extreme confidence in referral	Confidence in Referral Source
20. Lori: What kind of things did he tell you about counselling, if any?	Minimal information about counselling provided by	Lack of Information About Counselling Process

PJ: Not a whole lot, just that I need to.	referral source	
21. . . . he said some other things that I thought were quite profound. He said it would be easier for me if I had a crushed collarbone or a broken ankle and . . . people would recognize that here's a guy that's got something wrong with him . . . but he says, but what's a matter with you . . . is you've got a broken soul . . . . He meant I'm broken inside where nobody can see. It made complete sense to me.	Doctor's metaphor of a broken soul resonates with PJ – "Nobody can see my hurt"	I'm Broken Where Nobody Can See
22. I don't know exactly what the right term is for non-medicinal, non-pharmaceutical treatment, but whatever it is, that side of it, which I guess is what you do.	Attempts to define counselling in terms of drug free interventions	Strives to Define Counselling
23. . . . it's a rerun of what happened and . . . certainly with my stress being high, I don't remember as well as I normally would. So then I find out that this is what I was thinking	Use of journal provides sense of connection to his feelings and thoughts	Journal Provides Link to Self
24. It's always been hard for me to express my own feelings.	Difficulty expressing personal emotions	Expressing Emotions Is Difficult
25. . . . I was able to tell a female counsellor all kinds of things that, that I'm sure I probably wouldn't have said to the psychiatrist or to a male counsellor.	Disclosed to a female counsellor beyond what I would have to a male counsellor or psychiatrist	Counsellor's Gender Facilitated Emotional Openness
26. . . . I . . . am fairly intuitive about counsellors as to whether they care or not . . . and I didn't have any doubt, so my confidence level went way up.	I felt intuitively cared for so my confidence increased	Confidence Increased Knowing Counsellor Cared
27. I do know that I can't imagine having the same relationship with a male counsellor and getting the same kind of helpful input or whatever, or listening	Unable to conceive of an equally beneficial relationship with a male counsellor	Belief That Gender Significantly Influenced Therapeutic Relationship
28. So I'm coming here in a weakened condition, I don't want anybody jumping on me – nobody did.	Feelings of vulnerability were supported as he had hoped	Experience of Support While Vulnerable
29. And it was a bit like going to mom, but the only thing is you wouldn't say that to mom either. So the benefit is in the third person.	Attending counselling is like receiving mothering from a stranger	Counselling is Somewhat Like Mothering

30. . . . I just knew I could work with this woman.	Intuitive sense of viable working relationship	Intuitive Sense of Working Relationship with Female Counsellor
31. . . . you know how you can detect humility or arrogance? It was clear that I wasn't going to have a problem with some kind of arrogance.	My senses told me there was an absence of an ego problem	Perceived Absence of Arrogance in Counsellor
32. . . . there was no portent of threatening situations. So I did not believe that it was even going to go there . . . which is pretty fundamental if you're trying to get straightened out.	I felt completely safe which is essential to therapy	Perception and Experience of Safety as Essential
33. If I perceived her as something like I just came from (the school) . . . for therapy, it couldn't work. Because I would detect, even when she's smiling at me, that she's phoney.	I sense that the counsellor is genuine	My Counsellor is Genuine
34. It didn't really matter what she said, it, it was all fine with me . . . even if it was a really unusual idea, it didn't seem strange to me	I am open to whatever she has to say and suggest	Willingness to Openly Explore with Counsellor
35. . . . things that we did, some role playing things, which I said I don't like doing that, worked like crazy.	Experience of success using a previously opposed technique	Experienced a Successful Rediscovery
36. . . . even though I'm here to be helped, I feel like I'm a helper which is actually therapeutic	I also feel like a helper which is healing	Healing Comes From Helping and Being Helped Sense of Power Equality
37. . . . for an absolute certainty we're both learning things . . . I think that's a really fundamental thing in the relationship.	We are definitely both learning from each other, which I think is essential in the relationship	Perception of Shared Learning as Essential to Relationship.
38. Here I am, no cast on my foot, no crushed collarbone, sitting having coffee, and laughing with people in the restaurant. And . . . they say, "There's nothing wrong with him!" Which is how I look I guess. So, if I can say, "Yah, I've got this, they finally found out what it is" then it was probably what I was looking for.	Search for diagnosis motivated by sensitivity to others' perception of him	Sensitive of Other's Perception of Self
39. fun loving . . . it doesn't have to be clinical all the time . . . if things are funny, well we laugh.	Our humor brings fun into the session	Enjoys Humor In Counselling
40. I think she's really competent.	Believes in counsellor's ability	Perceived Counsellor as Skilled

41. . . . she can relate to what I tell her in terms of terminology and experiences	Experiences sense of connection with counsellor	Perception of Mutual Connection in Relationship
42. . . . then being in classes all the time while this is going on . . . I feel also like I'm getting the newest and best of what's current . . . and I feel good about that.	Perception of benefiting from the cutting edge while counsellor continues to attend classes	Considers Advantages Seeing A Student Clinician
43. it's the humility of, of her approach that makes everything easier for me.	Her modest style made me comfortable	Her Modesty Made Me Feel At Ease
44. . . . her phrasing of her statements is always careful and tentative rather than direct and . . . it's always more like, "Do you think . . ." or "What if we. . ." or "How does this sound . . ." This kind of preamble always sets it up to be non-threatening.	Recognition of sensitive questioning leads to non-threatening environment	Her Questioning Wasn't Threatening
45. It's . . . just good communication skills really . . . it's . . . pretty fundamental to the helping thing.	Awareness that communication is key to counselling	Communication is Essential To Therapy
46. . . . she might be even more brilliant even than I think because she may understand that that's my way that I always did things . . . so if I do that to him, he will respond to me.	Belief that counsellor has analyzed my style and matched her style accordingly to draw a responses from me	She was Skillful in Facilitating Communication
47. She's probably doing all kinds of things that I don't know . . . but I don't care about that, cuz whatever it is, it's working.	Let the mystery of counselling remain – it still works regardless	The Mystery of Counselling is Irrelevant to Its Success
48. Lori: Are there any qualities that you dislike about your counsellor? PJ: No.	Expressed no dislikes about counsellor qualities	Uncritical of Counsellor
49. (memorable event) Farthest thing from my mind. Hadn't even thought of it remotely. Ding. Yeah, why not? . . . very different from anything I thought and probably pretty productive, cuz the next day I went for a big long walk . . . but most times I'm too depressed or tired to actually put my coat on and walk	An unconventional counselling experience radiated productivity outside of the session	Receptivity to New Experience Radiated Benefits
50. . . . the other thing would be personalizing my depression as a thing. I call that "the vapours." . . . she would interview the vapours . . . and then I	The introduction of Narrative Therapy had significant personal impact	Impact of New Technique Resonates Deeply

	have to answer . . . . Which is really quite profound . . . I've never had that before.		
51.	I actually use it and it's helpful at home. So . . . feel like the depression is lifting	Incorporation of counselling into daily life has been useful	Integration of Counselling Into Daily Life
52.	. . . it's annoying to me, that the depression or the vapours can get me. It makes me mad that I'm tired . . .when I know that I could work on a car engine all day	I am resentful that the depression can control me	Angered By The Power of Depression
53.	I'd recommend what you do here, highly.	Expressed willingness to endorse the Clinic	Expressed Endorsement of Clinic
54.	It's the most useful thing that I've been involved in.	Recognition that counselling has been extremely useful	Believes Strongly In Utility of Counselling
55.	I couldn't do it on my own. I tried, and I've tried for a long time. And I didn't do it without knowledge either.	Despite effort and awareness, I couldn't help myself by myself	Acknowledgement That Outside Help Was Needed
56.	I feel accountable, a little bit. See, even I'm accountable to the vapours now.	Awareness of feeling responsible to himself	Strives To Be Accountable to Self
57.	If I read a book about depression, there's not necessarily, there won't be ANY connection that I didn't put there. But there will be, this way, some connection that she put there.	Counsellor's insights gives me additional perspectives that I wouldn't have thought of	Counsellor Provides Another Perspective
58.	I just feel that little bit more capable of doing what I have to do.	Experiences increased sense of self competence	Experienced Rising Self-Competence
59.	Maybe it's the empowerment, maybe that's all it is. Maybe she gave me permission to do what I have to do, that I couldn't get from myself.	Perhaps she granted me the freedom to explore that I couldn't get from myself	Counsellor Releases Inhibitions
60.	. . . now I'm really pro-counselling. I'd tell anybody to go to counselling.	I support counselling nowadays. I'd widely recommend it	Now I would Advocate For Counselling
61.	There's something really therapeutic about just talking about it.	Talking is helpful in and of itself	Just talking is helpful
62.	I haven't come back in here dragging my belly on the floor with feeling so low . . . somehow have put a bit of that in the past.	Recognition of progress/Issues are being dealt with	Acknowledged Progress is Occurring
63.	. . . it was that technique, I guess. Cuz I came out of here feeling, "Hey we handled this." . . . there was a lot of	Experienced a sense accomplishment and growth through one technique	Counselling Technique Provides Sense of Accomplishment and

growth just out of there. . . .		Growth
64. . . . then we would also do this vapour thing . . . and it is a good technique, and I hadn't ever thought of it before and hadn't ever done any like that. . . .	The application of a novel counselling technique was beneficial	Experienced Benefit From Novel Approach
65. . . . if I felt my stress level going sky high again, I suppose I would probably go back to my doctor and say," It's happening again, should I go back to the people at the University?" Maybe find my counsellor that I have now	Likely to seek out doctor's advice about further counselling Receptive to seeking help again should stress worsen	Utilizes Doctor's Advice About Further Counselling I Would Do It Again If Necessary
66. Lori: Would you recommend counselling to a friend who was in a difficult situation? PJ: Absolutely. . . . And I would be quite direct about it, because I think that's what my responsibility would be.	Feelings of obligation to recommend counselling to a friend at risk	Feels Obligated to Inform Others Who May Need Counselling
67. Lori: So if you were tell one of your friends who was thinking about suicide to go see their doctor, would you also recommend counselling? PJ: I'm sure I would now. I don't know if I would have before. For sure now.	I'm not sure if I would have recommended counselling before my experience, but I would now	Hesitant Attitudes Towards Counselling Have Dissolved
68. One guy was maybe 68 years old, multimillionaire. Nothing wrong with him. The family didn't have a clue, I don't think they even knew it was depression. Maybe he was good at hiding it. But all of a sudden one day he is gone. It's sad, it is, and I know that counselling is the answer to that, I absolutely know that. And in conjunction with some meds to get things back in order.	Counselling can definitely help people in need of serious assistance	Counselling Is Effective For Those in Need
69. . . . big improvement uh, in how I feel. I don't take as near as long to get up in the mornings	Experiences benefits outside of the counselling room	Improvement Extends Into Daily Life
70. . . . throughout the counselling thing . . . I feel way more valuable as a person, I have a lot more . . . recognition of self worth. I'm not worth any more than I was, I just feel like it.	Through counselling I feel more worthy of myself	Increased Feelings of Self-Worth
71. I've got kids that come back to me after 20 years and tell me what I said one day. I don't know what I said, you	Counselling has the ability to make long lasting personal impact	Counselling Can Change Your Life

	know, but it wasn't that anyway, but that day I reached that kid. And that's what counselling can do		
72.	cuz it's a tightly contained little situation where the counsellor has a lot of control about what happens and what gets said and how it gets interpreted.	Perception that the counsellor can significantly influence how therapy will progress	Perception of Counsellor As Powerful

Thematic Clusters of PJ's Experience

1. Experience of Living with Depression (17, 18, 21, 38, 52)
2. Experience of Previous Unhelpful Therapy (7, 8, 10, 14, 15)
3. Attribution of Motivators to Counselling (2, 4, 9, 16, 19)
4. Acknowledgment of Barriers Despite Need (1, 3, 20, 24, 55)
5. Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling (5, 6, 25, 27)
6. Perception of Therapeutic Essentials (30, 31, 33, 34, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46, 48, 57, 59)
7. Expresses Desirability of Attending a Training Centre (11, 12, 36, 42, 53)
8. Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling (22, 23, 28, 29, 32, 35, 39, 45, 47, 49, 50, 61, 63, 64, 72)
9. Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling (13, 26, 51, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 65 – 71)

Appendix E

Thematic Abstraction of Bill's Experience

		Two Levels of Abstraction	
	Excerpts from Protocols	Paraphrase	Theme(s)
1.	Lori: What were your expectations of counselling . . . ? Bill: . . . help me get out of the rut that I was in	Expectation that counselling would get me unstuck	Belief That Counselling Would Facilitate Movement
2.	I was hoping . . . maybe in a sense a magic bullet, just that everything would be gone . . . you know go and do this and then it will be okay	Hope of an easy solution that would make problems disappear	Hope For A "Magic Bullet"
3.	. . . obviously I had apprehension about doing it	Clear apprehension about counselling	Apprehensive About Counselling
4.	. . . there's still a stigmatism about going to counselling	Expressed social belief that counselling is stigmatized	Perception That Counselling is Stigmatized
5.	. . . the group of people that I'm acquainted . . . they've made comments about people going to counselling or they've laughed at people who've done that type of thing. . . .	I have watched people I know ridicule people in counselling	Vicarious Experience of Stigmatization
6.	. . . going into a situation where you don't know what is going on . . . just going into a situation where you're completely blind about the process . . . the future . . . what's going to come out of it . . .what you're going to find . . . . Whether it'll actually help or not.	Going into counselling I was blind about the process, how it would affect the future and whether it would be beneficial	Initially I Didn't Know What to Expect
7.	. . . you see that type of stuff on TV . . . so . . . going by what's on TV, that's all I had to go by.	All I knew about counselling was through TV images	Impressions of Counselling Shaped by Media
8.	. . . sometimes in TV, people will have epiphanies and all of a sudden things are all clear and . . . other times it's 22 years and people are still in . . . counselling . . . are you going to be the one that's in 22 years or are you going to be the one who has the epiphany or what?	Perception of time commitment influenced by images on TV – can counselling help me at all?	Can I be helped?

9. So apprehension about the not knowing the process and the end result about the process.	My apprehension surrounded the lack of knowledge about the process and what would happen when it was over	Apprehension Related to Unknown Process and Consequence.
10. Whereas individual it has to focus on . . . specifically me, it has to focus on my issues and I have to be honest with what is going on . . . so one-on-one is a lot more, um, having to face reality of what the issues are.	Belief that individual counselling compels you to take an honest look at yourself	Individual Counselling Forces Client Honesty
11. I liked her . . . she was very respectful throughout the whole process and . . . she was being honest.	Perception of referral source as likeable, respectful and genuine	Perception of Referral Source As Trustworthy
12. . . . more than anything it was just surprise that someone voiced it and then suggested that I, I do counselling . . .cuz I never really thought about it before that.	I hadn't considered counselling prior to her suggestion and it surprised me	Expressed Surprise at Counselling Referral Previously Hadn't Considered Counselling
13. I'm at a point where I am um, I haven't progressed from my early 20s with anything like work or career or friendships or relationships . . . I just need to get out of that, I need something else. And I'm hoping that this will carry me over to that something else. This being counselling.	Expressed hope that counselling will facilitate transition and growth	Hoped that Counselling will Facilitate Personal Growth
14. . . . it's easier talking to a stranger than someone you know. But I mean it's still hard.	Strangers are easier to talk to; however, the whole process is still difficult	Disclosure to a Stranger Is Easier Disclosure is Difficult
15. . . . it's hard for me to be honest about myself and let people know who I am and to let all that information come out. So I mean, it was difficult	It's difficult for me to genuinely open up to myself and others	Difficulty Being Sincere to Self Difficulty Being Sincere to Others
16. I've realized that I have to be honest and I have to give the information . . . if I wanted to get to a point where I can progress.	Realization that to progress, one must share the truth	Realization that Progress Requires Openness
17. . . . cuz more than anything I'm finding out that counselling is not necessarily somebody helping you, it's you realizing and helping yourself.	Important awareness that the client has to be active in the helping process	Awareness that Counselling Involves Self-Help
18. . . . and in fact they're here for the purpose and if they're going to be	It's their job not to be judgmental in the client's	Perception of Counsellor's Role Not To Be Judgmental

judgmental they're not necessarily going to be judgmental in front of you	presence	
19. I mean, I don't know what goes on behind the process.	Suggestion that there's more to counselling that remains hidden	Sense of Mystery Within Counselling
20. . . . the fact that I can say what I need to say and . . . that um, the person on the other end is a facilitator who is going to LISTEN.	The counsellor will listen to what the client needs to say	Expectation of Being Heard
21. . . . people that I know don't tend to, to listen very well when I have something to say. So in a sense I've got a captive audience.	In counselling I am guaranteed someone will listen, in my personal life I don't have that	Counselling Guarantees Someone Will Listen Perceived Lack of Support in Personal Life
22. There's no way I could talk to people I know about any of these issues.	Resolute concerning inability to discuss personal issues with peers	Perceived Inability to Seek Peer Support
23. . . . so the people that I know are acquaintances for the most part and they couldn't care less one way or the other. So I mean, if I started talking about this stuff they'd just shut, shut it out, tune out or walk away	Acknowledgement that social support group is limited and unapproachable	Feeling Lack of Support in Personal Life
24. . . . she tries to break down what I'm saying so that she can understand then, then turns it around and asks me if that's what I'm saying. And it makes me think about what I'm actually saying.	Counsellor's use of reflection facilitates client meta-cognition	Counsellor Facilitated Self-Reflection
25. . . . she helps me try to uh, in situations with other people, try to uh, think of different ways of talking to people, you know, interacting with people that I would've never thought of doing before, so I mean that helps quite a bit.	Counsellor provides a refreshing perspective that is helpful	Perceived Counsellor's Perspectives as Helpful
26. I think it's easier that my counsellor is a female.	Counsellor's gender makes counselling easier	Expressed Positive Influence of Counsellor's Gender
27. She tries to um, tries to get me to think . . . instead of giving me the answers.	She helps me find my own answers	Counsellor Facilitated Problem Solving
28. . . . it's helping me so that if I get into the same type of process in the future I can come up with the answer myself . . . that's what I like, it's more beneficial than anything so far.	The most beneficial thing is that I'm learning to solve my own problems	Expressed Benefits of Future Autonomy from Counselling

29.	I think just that women just have a different uh, point of view of things. And I think that's what I need more so than having a guy's point of view.	Belief that women see things differently than men and identified that need for a woman's perspective	Desire for a Women's Perspective
30.	. . . women sorta think more emotionally and . . . having someone try to facilitate that . . . I don't think a guy would be able to do that.	Belief that a male counsellor would not be able to help with emotional needs	Belief that Male Counsellor as Unable to Fill Emotional Needs
31.	. . . she's a good listener, she's very personable and um, not judgmental, I think that's important.	She's attentive, she's approachable and it's important that she doesn't judge me	Perception of Counsellor's Positive Attributes: Personable & Non-Judgmental
32.	. . . whenever we're talking she doesn't make judgements about how I dealt with a situation.	She doesn't judge my actions	I Don't Feel Judged
33.	She makes me think more about um, me, than . . . I've ever done before	Counselling has brought heightened self-awareness	Counselling Increases Self-Awareness
34.	. . . the one problem is the time thing cuz . . . sometimes it takes a while to warm up and um, then you start getting on a role and you want to see how it goes and then whoops, sorry time up. . . . I think sometimes, you know the 50 minutes or the hour um, can be somewhat detrimental	Sometimes it takes longer to engage in a session and the standard time limit can be hindering	Perception of Time Limits As Unhelpful
35.	. . . trying to wait for a week to come back and um, you never really get back on the same footing	Difficulty in recapturing the counselling process from previous session	Experienced Difficulty In Weekly Transitions
36.	. . . they have them booked one right after the other . . . and I know they still have classes . . . but if there was like half an hour in between or an hour in between so that you could carry on the process, I think that would help.	Desire to have additional time after session to process despite awareness of counsellor's other commitments	Desire to Have Extra Time Available
37.	I was asked what was the ten things that I liked about myself and it took me two weeks to figure out and . . . it made me very introspective	Counselling intervention caused significant personal reflection	Experience of Significant Personal Reflection
38.	. . . as we were talking it was uh, ME that came up with the way dealing with the situation that, that would actually work . . . so I mean, that was good.	Discussions helped me answer my own problems	Discussions Led Me to My Own Solutions Expressed Satisfaction in Solving Own Problems
39.	It helped quite a bit to think of different ways of um, dealing with a given	Counselling gave me a new perspective which was	New Perspectives from Counselling were Helpful

situation	helpful	
40. . . . thinking about how I want to deal with the situation or deal with the person um, can make things a whole lot easier later on in the line. . . .	Now I can see the benefits of thinking pro-actively	Recognition of Proactive Thinking as Beneficial
41. I didn't realize I had them. But I mean, it made me feel good that um, the answers are inside of me, all I have to do is think about it.	Now I know that I have the ability to solve my own problems and it gives me confidence	Sense of Resourcefulness Increases Confidence
42. I'm still in the learning process, I still react but I'm taking a little bit more time to think about situations more now than I would have in the past.	Acknowledges that more learning is needed; however, change has begun	Awareness that More Learning Is Required
43. Especially in dealing with people and that may very well be why I don't have a lot of friends or have friends is that um, the way I talk to people. . . . I know I'm very abrupt and very negative and in your face type thing that um people just shut off whenever I'm around. I'm realizing that I turn people off	Realization of how my behaviors can affect other relationships negatively	New Understanding of Interpersonal Relationships
44. I'm still making some of the same mistakes but at least now even if it's afterwards I'm thinking . . . "Ah, okay, what could I've done, what should I've done" which is a huge, huge difference from the way I was thinking before	I have changed in that I am more aware of my mistakes and I'm learning from them	Increased Awareness Creates Learning Opportunities
45. I liked that fact that um, it's making me think more. I don't normally use my brain power a lot.	I appreciate that counselling requires me to reflect more than I am used to	Appreciative of Increased Reflection from Counselling
46. . . . counselling is probably limited to another month and a half left and then it's over, so I mean, whatever happens after this I still have to uh, to work on you know, progressing and fixing whatever needs to be fixed.	Awareness that the work needs to continue after counselling is finished in order to progress	Awareness that More Work Required After Counselling Ends
47. . . . a lot of the answers are inside they just need to come out and right now the counselling is helping some of it come out and when that's over hopefully I'll have some of the skills to be able to bring the rest out.	Counselling has helped me find some answers and taught me useful skills for the future	Sense of Internal Self – Efficacy
48. I mean like REALLY tense. I sat straight, my muscles were all knotted. When I went into counselling I was very, very stiff. Uh, very, in a sense angry, negative, and wondering what I	When counselling first started my body was extremely tense and I was wondering what the hell I was doing here. Now I'm a	Initially Tense About Counselling Initially Pessimistic About Counselling

	was doing. Now I'm a lot more relaxed, I'm thinking more positive, I mean, I'm not as negative	lot more relaxed and less negative about things	Since Counselling More Open and Relaxed
49.	I'm a lot more willing to impart information and I'm a lot more willing to think about things that I didn't want to think about when I first started.	Since counselling began more open to sharing and examining previously avoided issues	Less Evasive Since Counselling
50.	Lori: What, if anything have you found helpful? Bill . . . somebody uh, that's there to listen . . . just having someone to talk to or talk with about things that have happened	Perceives dialogue and sharing as helpful	Just Talking Is Helpful
51.	. . . you can get it off your back so to speak. And it's not just there or it's not just festering . . . half the time it's just the matter of just having it come out . . . just talking about something	Sometimes it's difficult bringing up issues, but once they're out, it's a relief	Experiences Difficulty in Exposing Problems Experienced Release From Exposing Problems
52.	It's also kinda an outlet. . . . You just need somebody to listen every once in a while. . . . just having somebody be able to listen is phenomenal for me.	Counselling allows me to vent and be listened to and having that in my life is extraordinary	Experience of Being Heard Is Phenomenal
53.	. . . it's just um, helping me facilitate my own feelings.	Counselling makes it possible to connect to my own feelings	Counselling Provides Connections to Feelings
54.	I still may um, may not be, uh, completely to the point where I'm out of my rut, but it certainly will have helped facilitate uh, me moving out of it definitely.	Unquestionably counselling has moved me in a positive direction	Perception that Counselling Is Helping Initiate Positive Change
55.	. . . what I'm learning is that as much facilitating as possible um, it has to be up to me to do the work, to do the rest. This is only going to help to a certain point	I've discovered that counselling is finite and I am responsible for the remainder of the work	Acknowledged Counselling's Help Is Limited Acknowledged Responsibility for Future Progress
56.	I mean um, I'd be a lot more open to the possibility than I was initially this time around, obviously.	Since counselling, more receptive to seeking future counselling	Experienced Increased Receptivity to Future Counselling
57.	I'd be a lot more receptive uh, but the one thing I don't want obviously is to have it being used as a crutch in a sense.	Desire not to become dependent on counselling	Desire to be Independent of Counselling
58.	I'm a lot more receptive to it now than I	It would be easier to	Willing to Advocate For

was when I first started. So, I certainly would make it a lot more, a lot easier um, to, to let someone know that stuff's out there.	recommend counselling to someone given my sense of openness to counselling	Counselling Given Personal Experience
59. I'm realizing that . . . there's different ways to deal with people. And there's different ways to deal with situations and there's different ways to do things. And if anything it's making me realize that um, I have to take the blinders off and I have to think of other ways of doing things.	Counselling has taught me that there isn't only one way of doing things	Counselling Has Increased My Cognitive Flexibility
60. . . . that's part of why I'm in the rut because I'm thinking of things in one way. And if I want to get out of the rut then I have to open up and be willing to accept different ways of doing things and different ways of dealing with things, thinking about things instead of reacting, that type of stuff.	Realization that narrow thinking has been immobilizing / Openness to other's differences is needed to more forward	Recognized Consequences of Narrow Thinking Realization that Progress Requires Openness to Differences

Thematic Clusters of Bill's Experience

1. Lack of Social Support Drives Expectations for Counselling (1, 11, 13, 20 – 23)
2. Popular Images Influence the "Unknown" (2, 4 – 8, 19)
3. Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling (3, 9, 12, 14, 15, 49, 52)
4. Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling (26, 29, 30)
5. Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities (18, 24, 25, 31, 34)
6. Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling (10, 14, 27, 32, 38 – 40, 51 – 53)
7. Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling (35 – 37)
8. Experiences Increased Comfort with Counselling Process (49, 50, 57, 59)
9. Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling (16, 17, 28, 33, 41, 42, 44 – 46, 54, 60, 61)
10. Acknowledges Counselling is Limited – Future Work Depends on Self (43, 47, 48, 55, 56, 58)

Appendix F

Thematic Abstraction of Joe's Experience

	Two Levels of Abstraction	
Excerpts from Protocols	Paraphrase	Theme(s)
1. I have some internal problems I think I've known I had them for a long time . . . I just wanted to maybe clarify them in my own mind and have . . . a sympathetic ear	Desire to seek clarification of personal problems in a supportive environment	Desire for Personal Understanding Through Counselling
2. . . . financially I think this was a better way to do it . . . I . . . never really got as far as investigating you know, how much psychiatrists cost or, or, or analysts or, or, whatever, you know but uh, this certainly did fit the bill.	Despite not shopping around, these services made economical sense	Services Appeared Financially Attractive
3. . . . I was just hoping to free my mind uh a little bit and uh, maybe just be more relaxed with myself.	Hoping to find some inner relaxation	Desire for Inner Relaxation
4. . . . I thought it would be a lot more, maybe confrontational, you know. Um, uh, maybe a lot of you know, theories that were pushed on me, uh, that type thing.	Expected to experience confrontation and theoretical attacks	Expectation of Confrontation and Theoretical Attacks
5. . . . I didn't know whether it was going to really help me a lot	Questioned if counselling would be helpful	Questioned Helpfulness of Counselling Can I be helped?
6. I had the vision of the big couch and everything you know, lying down and just sorta spilling my guts, eh.	Stereotypical media image of counselling	Perception of Counselling Influenced By Popular Images
7. . . . a lot of what it's been is it's been um, trying to answer questions about myself you know, and try and maybe find some deeper meaning	Experience of counselling as delving inside myself and find explanations	Experience of Counselling Has Involved Increased Understanding of Self
8. I was very apprehensive for sure.	I was definitely apprehensive about counselling	Experience of Apprehension
9. . . . the first session I was trying to you know, impress . . . my analyst or	During the initial session I tired to convince the	Initial Desire to Appear "Normal"

whatever, my counsellor . . . that uh, I was a good guy . . . and I'm not crazy	counsellor that I was admirable and not mentally deficient	
10. . . . it was sorta like one of the things where I say, "Okay, yeah I'll do it, right." And then when it comes down to the actual day where you're going, then it's like, "Aw shit, I don't wanna do this" you know, like, "Why am I going through with it?"	On the day of the first session I wanted to cancel my commitment to attend counselling	Initial Desire to Revoke Commitment
11. So uh, uh, weeks by, go by, whatever, you know, you're setting up times um and, and it's like, "Oh" you know "I really don't want somebody to know all this stuff about me"	As the first session approached became protective of his privacy	Increasingly Guarded As Counselling Approached
12. . . . you don't know what's it going to be like, so, it's, it's hard.	Expressed difficulty in not knowing what to expect	Expressed Difficulty in the Unknown
13. I was told, you know, if you didn't like it or whatever, you could always just not do it you know. Like just say okay, have a couple of sessions and say forget it . . . so after I, I had thought about it, it wasn't such a big deal	After knowing that I had a way out, the more I thought about being in counselling, the less ominous it became	Knowledge About Counselling Process Reduced Anxiety
14. . . . that really uh, left a bigger scar than I really ever thought did . . . . Like uh, that affected me in a lot of ways . . . that you know, and it still does.	Acknowledges past wounds and their widespread impact	Recognition of Underlying Damage
15. . . . I use to put the walls up and that was a very hard thing to uh, uh bring down, you know, when I was talking to my counsellor.	Experienced difficulty removing psychological barriers when communication with counsellor	Experience of Psychological Barriers in Counselling
16. . . . she is, is of the opinion, you know, like your mind is, is, is just like uh, any other organ you've got. You know . . . if there's something wrong you know, you should do something about it. It doesn't mean you're crazy. . . . the way she had put it made it a lot easier for me to, to make the decision to go . . .	Referral source's perception of counselling encouraged him to attend – "I'm not crazy"	Experienced Support from Referral Source Experienced Validation from Referral Source – "I'm Not Crazy"
17. I still hate going every week . . . the physical getting here, the parking, and, and just the way it disrupts your life	Expressed disgust at counselling's disruption to daily life	Experienced Frustration at Counselling's Disruptive Schedule
18. I didn't want anybody to think that I	Did not want to appear	Desire to Appear Mentally

was weak, or, or um, mentally impaired	fragile or mentally incompetent	Competent
19. I always want to be my own man you know, I don't want anybody controlling me	I want to be in charge of myself, I don't want others to have power over me	Desire To Be In Control
20. . . . there's certainly no pressure for me to reveal anything that you know, happened in counselling or which I think is good . . . (to his wife)	Feels safe in that he is not pressured to disclose circumstances of sessions to wife	Wife's Respect for Counselling Process is Welcomed
21. . . . it was very hard to bring down my defence mechanisms, you know. . . . I still think there is like a lot of work to be done on that as far as I'm concerned	Acknowledges continued effort required to remove psychological barriers	Removal of Psychological Barriers Requires Significant Effort Experienced Difficulty in Lowering Personal Barriers
22. I'd just say that it is very hard. . . . I just want to be thought of as, you know, um in a good light . . . maybe what happened to me before has, has sorta led me to believe I'm not uh, a, a desirable a person . . . . You know. So um, yeah uh, very hard.	Expressed difficulty in discussing personal issues as he didn't want to be perceived as undesirable	Experienced Difficulty in Self-Disclosure Desire to Appear Attractive
23. I think you have to develop a, a, a sense of trust, you know, with your counsellor	It is important to develop trust with your counsellor	Identified Trust As Important In Therapeutic Relationship
24. . . . first couple (of sessions) are really hard because, you know, you don't know what their expecting of you	The initial stages of counselling are difficult because you don't know what you're required to do	Unknown Expectations In Counselling Create Anxiety
25. . . . sometimes their questions are a little too pointed for you right at the start you know . . . sorta you know, like a dentist sticking his instrument on a nerve or something . . . . and you're just like, you're, you're first reaction is to just sorta back away . . .just change the subject	Initially the counsellor's questions can sting too much and my first reaction is to disengage	Experience of Disengagement Through Pointed Questioning
26. . . . fortunately, uh my counsellor (short laugh) . . . could see what I was doing and bring me back to uh, uh, sometimes she just had to take a long route to get me back to where I was uh, was going.	She was aware of my reaction and she adjusted her style accordingly	Counsellor Is Sensitive to My Needs
27. . . . we did have a few, uh you know, really major breakthrough type stuff	Experience of significant moments in counselling	Experience of Turning Points In Counselling

28.	. . . she seemed uh, very sympathetic to certain um, problems that I had. She made me feel uh, at ease to discuss uh, certain things that I might not have discussed uh, uh, with anybody just normally.	Counsellor's support allows him to discuss otherwise normally concealed issues	Counsellor's Support Encourages Disclosure
29.	Joe: I sorta, (short laugh) uh, need a lot of coaxing and a lot of um, soft soap there, you know. . . Lori: And so do you feel that with her? Joe: Absolutely.	Counsellor's gentle approach is what I need	Counsellor Is Sensitive to My Needs
30.	I certainly just uh, um this felt very comfortable with her.	Feels at ease with counsellor	Experienced Ease With Counsellor
31.	. . . she just seemed to be genuinely interested in what I had to say as opposed to . . . just recording everything (pointed to video camera in room) and asking all the obvious questions	The counsellor moved beyond the basics and seemed to genuinely care	Perceived Counsellor As Genuinely Engaged In Process
32.	She really seemed to want to help me to improve	I know she wants to help me	Perceived Counsellor As Dedicated To Helping
33.	I'm in my mid forties whatever, I thought maybe she might be a little young to understand some of the problems I might have	At first I thought she was too young to related to my problems	Initially Perceived Age Discrepancy as Hindering
34.	. . . it was to my advantage to have a female counsellor.	I was fortunate to have a female counsellor	Expressed Satisfaction for Counsellor's Gender
35.	I've never had a male counsellor before . . . but I would just think that . . .just you know, to be strong and the whole macho thing. You know, like with another guy . . . I may be something like that.	I think if I would have had a male counsellor I would have put on a "tough guy" front	Sense of Maintaining Image For a Male Counsellor
36.	. . . the whole you know um the whole motherhood thing you know. . . . makes it a little easier to open up	Perception of woman's nurturing qualities made it easier to disclose information	Counselling is Somewhat Like Mothering Receptivity to Mothering Made Disclosure Easier
37.	. . . as far as the actual counselling part goes, you know. Um, rearranging your life to be able to fit everything in is hard . . . like the scheduling.	Adjusting your routine to attend counselling is annoying	Experience of Scheduling Frustrations
38.	We did a couple of sessions behind	Experience of live	Experience of Live

the, the mirror (one way glass) and . . . that uh, was a concern at times . . . . It's just like you're getting on you're train of thought and then boom the phone rings, eh. . . . it sorta chopped up our, our, um I could never get into a complete uh, uh flow. . . . It was pretty disruptive.	supervision as disruptive to the counselling process	Supervision As Disruptive
39. I know this is um, not only for me, but for her too, so you know.	Awareness that counsellor is also benefiting from the experience	Awareness of Mutual Benefits from Sessions
40. . . . something came up that . . . I had totally forgot about . . . a personal moment that might have been pivotal in . . . my life, you know.	Recollection of pivotal moment in life that surfaced in session	Experience of Revealing Latent Memories
41. . . . it was very, very powerful in my mind and I, I started crying and uh, I got my counsellor crying too.	Experience of powerful emotion in which both counsellor and client shared	Experience of Shared Emotion in Counselling
42. I think maybe it was something I, I had to think about. You know, like to be able to maybe to make some progress.	Realization that progress requires reflection on the past	Recognition that Progress Requires Self-Reflection
43. It was hard, like . . . Why did I do that? . . . like how did she get me to do that, you know. Like uh, um, let's move on to something else . . . this is too hard, this is too painful.	Bewildered at loss of emotional control results in desire to retreat to something less painful	Desire to Retreat During Painful Experience
44. I didn't want her to feel sorry for me.	I'm not here to be pitied	Desire Not to be Pitied
45. . . . let's proceed to zoom out into something where I can be cast into a more favorable light	I don't like to appear insecure	Desire to Avoid Vulnerability
46. I felt like I was out of control. Like I didn't have control anymore and . . . it was like I didn't have control of myself emotionally	Experience of loss of emotional control	Experienced Loss of Emotional Control
47. I was certainly a lot more up tight there at the beginning um, a lot more defensive	At the beginning I was more guarded	Initially I Was Guarded
48. I'm a lot more open to be able to talk about certain things that I . . . probably wouldn't have been able to like six or seven months ago before this all started.	More willing to discuss personal issues than when I began counselling	Since Counselling Increased Willingness to Disclose
49. I just feel a lot more relaxed, a lot more open to suggestions	I have become more at ease and willing to explore	More Open to The Process Since Counselling

50. I think just knowing my counsellor, knowing, uh, that again that she does . . . have a personal interest in . . . how it's going and, and uh, in me as a person.	Knowing that my counsellor cares for me puts me at ease	Knowledge of the Counsellor's Concern Was Comforting
51. Plus, uh, I think that . . . as a student, uh, she is probably trying a lot harder than you might be, if you would be, say done this for twenty years	Belief that counsellor gives more effort because she is a student compared to someone who is seasoned and experienced	Belief that Counsellor's Effort is Motivated by Inexperience
52. . . . it's special to her too, so she wants to probably make an impression on me and try and effect some change	She's trying to be effective because she has a stake in this too	Awareness of Counsellor's Desire to be Effective
53. I don't want this to run on for a long time, I happy, you know, I'm going to be happy when it's over in April	Expresses relief that counselling won't drag on – it will be over soon	Looking Forward to the Conclusion of Counselling
54. . . . every couple of years it just might be a good idea to . . . go in for six months and just sorta you know, let things loose . . . just like maintenance for a car. . . .	Considers using counselling in future for self-preservation	Receptive to Utilizing Counselling Again for Self-Maintenance
55. I'd recommend it to other people.	I would recommend counselling	I Would Advocate for Counselling
56. I think this might be you know . . . sorta a way of life for me, like to develop into a way of . . . just sorta, getting rid of some excess baggage . . . and getting in touch with yourself, absolutely.	Foresees counselling as the start of a new routine to sustain oneself	Foresees Integration of Counselling into Way of Life
57. It's nice to air some um, concerns once in a while where you don't feel like uh, anyone is judging you, uh sometimes there are things you don't want to talk to your wife about	Counselling provides a release where I won't be judged and it will remain confidential	Perception of Counselling As A Refuge
58. Lori: What, if anything, do you find helpful about counselling? Joe: . . . just maybe being able to recognize some of the problems that you do have that are sorta brought to the surface by . . . . being able to . . . change the way you think about yourself, or maybe about other people too	Counselling is helpful because it creates personal awareness and the ability to change	Counselling Helped Facilitates Personal Awareness and Change
59. . . . to be able to come in and do stuff like this, you know, is something that I	I never would have considered counselling	Perceived Wife's Influence as Integral to Pursuing

	never would have thought of without the help of my wife	without my wife's help	Counselling
60.	. . . we're definitely changing things through our counselling	Through counselling we are definitely changing	Experienced Change Through Counselling
61.	I must say that we are trying to use our counselling. Like we're not just coming in you know, spouting off and then going and not doing anything	Strives to apply counselling to daily life	Strives To Integrate Counselling
62.	. . . instead of just making it dead time or whatever, absolutely . . . we apply what we've learned	Active in utilizing lessons from counselling	Strives To Integrate Counselling
63.	In general, I think it has been very, very positive.	Overall, counselling has been positive	Perception of Counselling As A Positive Experience
64.	I'm changing certain parts of how, the way I think about things . . . being less critical about myself . . . to be able to trust other people a little more . . . those are . . . things that have affected me in general.	In general I'm changing the way in which I think about my self and I am becoming more trusting of others	Counselling Helped Change My Self-Image More Willing to Trust Since Counselling

Thematic Clusters of Joe's Experience

1. Expresses Desire for Personal Resolution (1, 3, 14)
2. Attribution of Motivators to Counselling (2, 16, 20, 59)
3. Onset of Counselling Invokes Suspicion and Trepidation (4 – 6, 8, 10 – 12, 24)
4. Experience of Personal Barriers to Counselling (9, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 43 – 45, 47)
5. Expresses Importance of Gender on Counselling (34 – 36)
6. Experience of Exposure Creates Memorable Moments (7, 27, 40, 41, 46)
7. Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities (26, 28 – 32, 50)
8. Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling (17, 33, 37, 38, 53)
9. Perception of Defining Elements of Counselling (13, 23, 42, 57)
10. Experience of Increased Receptivity Resonates with Personal Gains (48, 49, 58, 60, 64)
11. Perception of Counsellor's Personal Stake (39, 51, 52)
12. Expresses Willingness to Integrate Counselling (54 – 56, 61 – 63)

Appendix G

Thematic Abstraction of Spencer's Experience

		Two Levels of Abstraction	
	Excerpts from Protocols	Paraphrase	Theme(s)
1.	My expectations of counselling was . . . to improve the father-son relationship . . . he's a step son.	I came to counselling to improve my relationship with my son	Desire for Counselling to Improve Relationship with Son
2.	. . . we had a goal to uh, improve our relationship as part . . . of the dynamics of a family by improving our relationship and behavior that it would also have a positive spin off for my wife and other son.	Perception that by improving this relationship the outcome would radiate across the family system	Perception That Benefits Would Improve Family System
3.	Lori: What did you think counselling would be like? Spencer: a lot of verbal communication. . . . . For us to come up with our own solutions with the counsellor, uh providing insight and direction.	I thought counselling would involve a lot of talking that would allow us to solve our own problems with the counsellor's help	Expectation of Insight & Direction from Counsellor
4.	I wasn't . . . expecting a quick fix . . . we didn't expect a miracle in a short period of time, but we wanted some tools and techniques uh, in terms of, uh, improving our, our relationship.	I knew that change would be a long process and so I was hoping to learn strategies that would help with the change	Desire to Learn Strategies to Help With the Long Road Ahead
5.	. . . I definitely thought that I had to take the lead role. . . . So I . . . took on . . . some guilt uh because of that and also some responsibility.	Experienced a sense of responsibility and guilt for having to take the lead role	Experience of Pressure to Take Responsibility
6.	The guilt comes from . . . in terms of . . . my responsibility for the whole relationship. Uh, uh, rightly or wrongly, but it seems that I had to take ownership of it.	Experience of guilt stemmed from the perception of responsibility for entire relationship	Experience of Guilt for Being Responsible for Relationship Difficulties
7.	. . . "well gee you know if, if things improve between uh, uh, you and Trevor then things will improve between you and me in terms of	Experienced a sense of burden for responsibility to improve all relationships in the family	Experience of Burden To Improve All Family Relationships

husband and wife and you know between you and Glen, the other son" . . . so there's . . . a sense of uh, um burden		
8. . . . when me and my spouse are talking about uh, possible separation or if things don't improve uh, uh, a break-up of the family and those are pretty heavy consequences of uh, to face.	Family difficulties threatened a potential separation between the spouses	Problems Threatened Cohesion of Family System
9. . . . so I mean, we both knew as, as spouses that something had to be done.	Awareness that change was needed by both husband and wife	Acknowledgement That Outside Help was Needed
10. Oh, she had a very strong part (laughed). You know, um, uh, in terms of motivational factor . . . she was influential in, in you know, uh saying, stating yes in that . . . something that had to be done, and uh, it was a strong influence in that regard.	Recognition that wife as significantly influential in recognizing change was necessary	Wife Significantly Influenced Decision to Attend Counselling
11. . . . it became self motivational on the part of me and my son that we were experiencing improvement uh, therefore it was self-fulfilling.	Once improvement was visible, it increased our motivation	Internal Motivation for Counselling Positively Correlated with Improvement
12. At the start I had some uh, you know guilt and, and uh, maybe even better word is resentment that my wife wasn't partaking in the counselling. Uh, too much of a feeling that uh, you know, it was my fault or my you know, something I did.	Initially experiences resentment at having to carry burden of responsibility for both spouses	Initially Feels Resentment for Burden of Family Problems
13. You know, saying, "well gee you know if you change Spencer the rest of us will change and everything will be better." And the first thought was, well, why do I have to be the one that has to change, you know. What have I done or, what am I doing that's so drastically wrong. Why don't other people also change at the same time?	It felt unfair that it was up to me to change the family dynamics single-handedly	Expressed Unfairness Towards the Responsibility of Changing the Family
14. Lori: Describe what was like for you to discuss personal issues in counselling. Spencer: A degree of uh,	Experience of embarrassment, anxiety, vulnerability and shame in discussing personal issues in counselling	Disclosure in Counselling was Extremely Uncomfortable

	embarrassment. Um, a little bit of anxiety. I mean you are exposing yourself to uh, uh, to other individuals, your thoughts or feelings. So a sense of uh, vulnerability. Um, and uh, some cases maybe even shame.		
15.	I was extremely guarded at the uh, first counselling session . . . I was trying to think before I talked so I wasn't uh, you know on that emotional plane or that release . . . I was a bit more calculating in terms of what I was saying . . . I was . . . more conscious of my body language.	Initially I was guarded, I kept my emotions under control and I was aware of what I was saying and how I was being perceived	Initial Experience of Guarding Personal Information
16.	. . . , as the counsellor made me more comfortable, more relaxed then . . . I became more open.	The counsellor's approach decreased anxiety and encouraged and openness	Counsellor's Style Encouraged Relaxation and Openness
17.	. . . the counsellor used some good techniques	The counsellor's techniques were useful	Expresses Satisfaction In Counsellor's Techniques
18.	. . . so once I found some intrinsic value . . . being more open and being more vulnerable was fine.	Willing to risk once inherent value was discovered	Easier to Risk Once Counselling Proved Valuable
19.	I had an expectation that . . . in terms of uh, of having good results that you have to get down to the underlying problems and issues and . . . having to expose . . . feelings and emotions	Expectation of successful counselling involving emotional exposure	Expectation that Emotional Exposure Required to Progress
20.	My approach in terms of my character is such that I'm supposed to be the strong one in the family. . . . I'm the person who's you know, supposed to keep the stiff upper lip . . . keep the family together and moving them along. And that's . . . one of the, the factors in, in me willing to participate in counselling to begin with.	Willingness to participate in counselling influenced by protective role	Participation Influenced By Responsibility to Protect the Family
21.	My wife and I do have very stereotypical roles in the family. My wife is the emotional caregiver in the family and dad's the more pragmatic, uh, you know uh, bring home the, the bread and butter type of individuals. . . . and counselling has been able to uh, enable us to see why we have uh, these roles we	Counselling has shed light on our family roles	Gains Understanding of Family Roles Through Counselling

do have		
22. Counselling has helped seeing you know what qualities we liked in each other, what attracted us to begin with and um, realization that people do change over time, and the relationship changes . . .	Counselling has provided understanding about our relationships	Gains Understanding of Relationships Through Counselling
23. I'm sure the issues would have come out anyway (without counselling); however . . . the level of understanding wouldn't have been there. . . . So uh, being better able to communicate and understand has uh, has helped us out tremendously.	Counselling has definitely helped increase our communication and understanding	Experiences Increased Communication and Understanding Through Counselling
24. There was a degree of uh, flexibility um and understanding of uh, the issues uh, an agreement in terms of what the goal of counselling	The counsellor was flexible and understood our goals of counselling	Perception of Counsellor as Receptive to Needs
25. . . . sometimes for me uh, being more concrete or practical having a measure showing that, that things are improving or had improved is better than just talk.	Perceived the measuring tool as more useful to gauge improvement than simply talking	Quantified Measurement of Improvement Is Better Than Just Talking
26. . . . so a good reference point, some sort of measuring device uh, that could articulate very quickly whether or not things were improving, or not improving or whether or not there was a set back . . .	The measuring tool quickly showed whether there was improvement or not which was useful	Expresses Usefulness of Measuring Tool
27. . . . different tools or techniques that we could take away with us, practice and discuss what worked or what didn't work at the next session. So um, uh that worked out very well.	Counselling allowed us to explore which techniques were helpful or unhelpful	Counselling Enabled Us to Safely Explore New Ways of Relating
28. I guess there's a fear, well gee this support and counselling has been great you know, uh, but once you leave the last session sort of thing you know, well gee I'm hoping that everything is in place and will continue but . . . you're changing and you're hoping that you're not going to have a significant set back where you sorta wonder well you know, get back into that rut.	Experience of anxiety once the support of counselling is removed – Can we make it on our own?	Experiences Anxiety At The End of Counselling Concerned That Deterioration May Occur Without Counselling

29. I'm glad that we've accomplished our goal and, and furthermore, I'm glad that things have improved between . . . my son and I.	Sense that goals have been accomplished	Expresses Satisfaction That Goals Were Achieved
30. It's too bad counselling can't be a situation where uh, it can't be weaned off of. You know uh, you know, going from week to week to nothing that uh, perhaps it was from week to week to uh, then a month then maybe a follow up session. So you have that follow up and support, but maybe a sense of a safety net.	Desire for counselling to end gradually as a precautionary measure	Desire for a Gradual End to Counselling – Just In Case
31. . . . , he being a father provided some insight.	Counsellor's personal experience as a father was helpful	Belief that Counsellor's Personal Experience was Valuable
32. . . . being able to provide that expertise in, in family counselling in regards to tools and techniques you know and such important manners as, as, uh, discipline and goal setting	Counsellor was able to provide skilled expertise and strategies	Perception of Counsellor as Knowledgeable and Skilled
33. Lori: What qualities, if any, did you like about your counsellor? Spencer: . . . he had the flexibility to deal with situations that occurred at home, you know during the week.	Perception of the counsellor as flexible to change to needs of clients as helpful	The Counsellor's Flexibility Was Helpful
34. So uh, and of course the empathy of the counsellor (was helpful). . .	Perception of counsellor as empathetic was helpful	The Counsellor's Empathy Was Helpful
35. . . . (counselling) helped me out because uh, it reduced my feelings uh, of guilt or, or burden . . . from the start.	Counselling reduced initial feelings of burden and guilt	Experiences Reduced Feelings of Burden and Guilt Through Counselling
36. . . . (the) counsellor did a good job of setting up the framework uh for some productive communication between uh, my son and I.	The counsellor facilitated beneficial communication between father and son	The Counsellor Facilitated Beneficial Communication
37. Lori: What qualities if any did you dislike about your counsellor? Spencer: I can't think of uh any qualities I particularly disliked.	Expressed no dislikes about counsellor qualities	Uncritical of Counsellor
38. . . . the cameras were a bit	Despite not using the cameras,	Experiences Intimidation

	intimidating even though, even though the counsellor uh, didn't use them. Uh, just that fact that they were there, I was still conscious of them.	their presence was intimidating	Through Awareness of Cameras
39.	Knowing what the camera could . . . capture it you know. Uh, it could be there for, for, forever. . . . it's still a threatening feature.	Knowing that the cameras could capture our problems forever is threatening	Awareness of Camera's Power Is Threatening
40.	. . . the counsellor said well I have certain rights you know, that, you know that uh, uh, I shouldn't be assaulted in my, my own home. I guess the vindication that, that yeah that uh, uh, you know I do have certain rights that I should be able to stand up for myself . . . that sort of uh, support that uh, uh, gee I didn't do anything wrong or, you know that I have every right to be offended	The counsellor validated my rights	Counsellor Provided Validation
41.	. . . also the fact since we're trying to improve a father son relationship that uh, I think in this case the male had a better understanding because of that, that background of, of being a father and the issues.	Perception that counsellor's ability to understand was related to his gender and personal background	Belief that Counsellor's Background Influenced His Understanding Belief that Counsellor's Gender Influenced His Understanding
42.	. . . well for me for, for opening up more and admitting some sort of uh, uh, family problems . . . with uh, uh, with a female. . . uh, perhaps in the back of my mind thinking that uh, she would automatically sort of side with my wife.	Expressed concern that a female counsellor would side with his wife	Expresses Concern that Female Counsellor May Be Biased
43.	I think the counsellor in this case could bring some insights uh in the level of uh, communication uh, uh, uh, a level of acknowledgement and uh validity.	The counsellor brought insights, acknowledgement and validation into the counselling process	Counsellor Was Insightful Counsellor Demonstrated Genuine Understanding Counsellor Provided Validation
44.	For me to admit that I'm having difficulties as a father to another man well . . . it's a bit uh more easier to identify with, more relational	Perception that a male counsellor is easier to relate with in discussing problems as a father	Easier to Relate With Another Father
45.	Lori: How do your initial	Since counselling, the process is	Since Counselling, Process

counselling sessions compare to your last few sessions? Spencer: . . . a lot more open, a lot more sense of uh, ease um, better communication, not only between um, my son and I but between the three of us, between me and the counsellor as well.	more open and natural, and there is improved communication among everyone involved	Is More Comfortable Recognized Improved Communication Among Clients and Counsellor
46. I wasn't as guarded, I wasn't as calculating in terms of, uh, my answers. I was a lot more open and freer with my thoughts and feelings.	Since counselling my guard has lifted and I'm more open with my emotions	Experiences More Freedom to Express Thoughts and Feelings Since Counselling
47. I was quite surprised I was able to release more.	I surprised myself by my openness	Expresses Surprise At Amount of Personal Openness
48. . . . the counsellor did provide some excellent tools and techniques and insight into uh, the issues between Trevor and I.	The counsellor's skills were effective	Acknowledges Success of Counsellor's Skills
49. . . . I'd be less hesitant to use it (counselling) in the future.	Since counselling less hesitant to seek future counselling	Less Apprehensive About Future Counselling
50. I'm glad, that, that we got benefits out of it at the same time we're happy that . . . we're getting out the commitment.	Grateful for the benefits of counselling / Grateful for the end of the commitment	Expresses Gratitude Toward Counselling Benefits The Commitment was Constricting
51. . . . even though you recognize that we needed it and it was beneficial, at the same time it was still disruptive to our daily uh, to our daily lives.	Despite recognition counselling was needed, it was still disruptive to daily life	Despite Need Counselling It Was Disruptive to Our Lives
52. So uh, at the one hand uh, would I rush back into counselling – no, but . . . if say things really deteriorate between Trevor and I then I wouldn't hesitate . . . seeking counselling and assistance	Counselling would be sought if there is serious deterioration	Willing to Seek Counselling if Necessary
53. . . . only because this has been a, a positive um, session and outcome that I wouldn't hesitate to uh, enter it again.	Because of this success I would seek counselling again	Based On These Results Able to Consider Future Counselling
54. . . . I'm going to use you know, some tools and techniques that, that I learned.	I will apply what I have learned from counselling	Desire to Apply Counselling in Daily Life

55. I don't think I have the same amount of shame you when as when I went into it. . . . like I wouldn't even mention to them, but now I'm more inclined to say hey there is assistance out there you now and just go seek it.	Since counselling my shame has lessened so I would be more likely to encourage others to seek counselling	Less Shameful About Counselling More Willing to Encourage Others to Seek Counselling
56. . . . it's (counselling) had, had a broader based impact more so than I had uh, originally thought.	Counselling's impact has been more extensive than I had anticipated	Surprised At the Extensive Impact of Counselling
57. It's (counselling) provided some good insight in terms of my own behaviors and expectations. . . . so that insight has helped quite a bit.	Counselling has provided personal insight that has been helpful	Experience of Increased Self-Awareness Has Been Helpful
58. . . . there's a couple of techniques that, that I've used at work, you know, one of them being that being clear about expectations at work, or um, uh, being a little bit less strict I guess or demanding.	Applies counselling techniques to the workplace	Application of Counselling Extends to Workplace
59. . . . so it's been positive not only between my son and I but between my other son and my wife and uh, um, you know, also in terms of other friendships and working relationships.	Belief that the positive impact of counselling has extended to other relationships	Counselling Benefits Have Spread to Other Relationships
60. I, I thought uh, uh, uh, the counsellor was competent and professional.	Perception that the counsellor was skilled and professional	Perception of Counsellor As Competent and Professional
61. . . . one of the aspects that, that drew me uh, to the University in regards to the Educational Psychology Department, was being able to uh, get the counselling at the same time, give something a bit back in terms of uh, the counsellor gaining some further experience.	Concurrently helping and being helped was an attractive aspect to seeking counselling at the University	Perception of Helping and Being Helped Was Attractive
62. . . . I appreciate the fact that uh, uh, people have to learn and, and, they have to have practicals and practicums and learning experiences uh, that they, they may just have all the theory and knowledge uh, but not . . . the in depth counselling, actual experience of doing that.	Understanding of the learning process that student counsellors engage in	Expresses Understanding of the Counsellor Training Process
63. . . . they still are being supervised,	I had confidence in knowing that	Expresses Confidence in

that uh, uh, there is a doctor of psychology is . . . providing guidance and direction in regards to that, that if something was drastically wrong, that uh, they would be drawn in. So that if things weren't improving that uh, the counsellor would have drawn upon other uh, internal resources. . . . I had confidence.	there would be a qualified psychologist to step in if progress was not forthcoming or problems arose.	Support Structure of Clinic

Thematic Clusters of Spencer's Experience

1. Attribution of Motivators to Counselling (5 – 10, 12, 13, 20)
2. Identifies Expectations of Counselling (1 – 4, 19)
3. Perception of Counsellor's Essential Qualities (16, 24, 32 – 34, 36, 37, 40, 43, 60)
4. Expresses Importance of Gender/Personal Background of Counsellor (31, 41, 42, 44)
5. Expression of Satisfaction in Tools and Techniques (17, 25, 26, 48)
6. Perception of Hindering Aspects of Counselling (14, 15, 38, 39, 50, 51)
7. Realization of Counselling's Worth Generates Openness (11, 18, 27, 35, 45 – 47, 55)
8. Experience of Positive Growth From Counselling (21 – 23, 29, 49, 50, 52 – 59)
9. Termination of Counselling Invokes Apprehension (28, 30)
10. Expresses Positive Sentiments for Training Institution (61 – 63)

Appendix H

Themes Shared By All Participants

1. Experiences Significant Environmental Strain
2. Indicates Security in External Source as Integral
3. Identifies Initial Outcome Expectations
4. Conveys Preconceptions of Counselling
5. Experiences Difficulty in Initial Disclosure
6. Experiences Relief From Counselling
7. Experiences Increased Comfort with Counselling Process
8. Describes a Safe and Supportive Environment as Essential
9. Identifies Counsellor's Gender as Significant to Counselling Process
10. Perceives Essential Qualities of Counsellor
11. Acknowledges Change Through Counselling
12. Recognizes Internal Change in Self
13. Gains Understanding of Self
14. Experiences Motivation to Integrate Counselling
15. Expresses Willingness to Consider Future Counselling
16. Experiences Increased Willingness to Advocate for Counselling

Appendix I

Higher Abstraction of Clustered Shared Themes

1. Pressures and Barriers that Influenced Initial Process of Counselling

    Experiences Significant Environmental Strain
    Indicates Security in External Source as Integral
    Identifies Initial Outcome Expectations
    Conveys Preconceptions of Counselling
    Experiences Difficulty in Initial Disclosure

2. Experiences Emotional Relaxation In Counselling

    Experiences Relief From Counselling
    Experiences Increased Comfort with Counselling Process

3. Perception of Influential Qualities In Counselling

    Describes a Safe and Supportive Environment as Essential
    Identifies Counsellor's Gender as Significant to Counselling Process
    Perceives Essential Qualities of Counsellor

4. Counselling Has Encouraged Change and Growth

    Acknowledges Change Through Counselling
    Recognizes Internal Change in Self
    Gains Understanding of Self
    Experiences Motivation to Integrate Counselling

5. Experiences Increased Receptivity Towards Counselling

    Expresses Willingness to Consider Future Counselling
    Experiences Increased Willingness to Advocate for Counselling